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# ELEMENTS OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS

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TORONTO

# SOME ELEMENTS

OF THE

# RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF JESUS

## ACCORDING TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

BEING THE JOWETT LECTURES FOR 1910

BY

C. G. MONTEFIORE

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# PREFACE

The six Lectures of which this little book is composed were delivered at the Passmore Edwards Settlement in November and December 1909. They formed the Jowett Lectures for 1910, which, to suit the convenience of the Lecturer, were held a few months before the usual time. They were repeated, by request, in the spring of this year at Manchester College, Oxford.

The Lectures are here printed almost word for word as they were delivered. If any attempt had been made at expansion or revision before publication, one would not have known where to begin or to end, and the character of the Lectures would soon have been completely changed.

I should like to add that the Lectures were written in September 1909, prior to the issue of my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels*. My reason for mentioning this

fact is that the Lectures do not refer to, or take note of, the many criticisms (mostly kindly and all useful) which that work has received from both Jewish and Christian hands. Though these criticisms have not, so far, made me disbelieve in the main views and conclusions which are expressed in the *Commentary*, they have yet pointed out to me several errors in detail. The substance of most of the Jewish, and of a few of the Christian, criticisms could have been predicted. Indeed, I might say that because I was sure that they would come, I took the trouble to write my book. They seem to me to prove its need. If a few of these Jewish and Christian reviews were printed in parallel columns, they would provide somewhat quaint and interesting reading. Meanwhile I can only express my gratitude to all my critics, whether Jewish or Christian. I have learnt something, I trust, from them all.

The tiny scale of the present Lectures made it necessary to omit many things, and to deal very roughly and inadequately with all things. I trust, however, that extreme brevity may not have led to obscurity. In many cases where I should

have liked to add more qualifications and reserves, the reader may probably feel an added gratitude to the limitation of time and space which has caused their omission. Perhaps some who read the Lectures may be inclined to dip into the *Commentary*, where the views here set forth are put forward in greater fullness, though in a less connected form.

In conclusion, I desire to express my gratitude to the Committee of the Jowett Lectureship for having done me the great honour of electing me as a "Jowett Lecturer." I am very sensible that in scholarship and capacity I make but a poor show as compared with my predecessors. The novel point of view from which I of necessity had to treat the subject assigned to me was doubtless the main reason which led to my election. I can but hope that this novel point of view is not represented and supported too feebly and inadequately in the Lectures which are here given to the public at large.

C. G. M.

*May* 1910.

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# I

## JESUS AS PROPHET

It is with the greatest diffidence and hesitation that I venture to address you. To speak on so important and difficult a subject ought to be enough to alarm a man much more capable and learned than I am. Moreover, to speak after men who are real scholars is a desperate task for one who cannot claim to be a scholar at all. Lastly, to give lectures connected with a name so distinguished and revered as that of Benjamin Jowett, a man to whom I myself owe so much, and look up to so greatly, adds to my deep sense of anxious responsibility.

But we all know that excuses and apologies are dull things. There shall then be no more of them; only I must indicate to you what I have to offer, and why, with the keen consciousness of many limitations, I am nevertheless opening my mouth.

I am unable—and indeed I am not sup-

posed even by the kind and broad-minded persons who have invited me—to give you any new results of my own learning and scholarship. There are many men who have devoted a lifetime to the investigation of the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity. Some of them have told you the results of their researches in previous years. To them, like yourselves, I have gone, and from their works I have quarried; I have been at school with them, and I have sat at their feet, or, if I may put it so, at the feet of their books. But I am not one of their company. Yet I am here to-day to speak about the hero of the first three Gospels and of his teaching, because, in the first place, I am not one of his professed followers—I am not, in other words, a Christian — and because, in the second place, I belong to the race from which he sprang and to the religion in which he was born—in other words, I am a Jew.

There are advantages and disadvantages for such a person in his study of the Gospels. But from the point of view of this audience, the disadvantages as well as the advantages have this one peculiar excellence—they are new. And that is really why I am here, and it is enough, at all events, to keep me unconceited, if also to increase my sense of responsibility. For a hundred books which you may have read, and for a hundred lectures

you may have heard, about Jesus and his teaching from Christians or men of Christian faith, you will hardly have heard or read one from a Jew. From that point of view I have probably had—so far as you are concerned—no predecessors or competitors.

To be a complete outsider ought to make one impartial. I sometimes wonder if we might not get an ideal history of Christianity and of its origins from the pen of a learned Buddhist or from some disciple of Confucius. Just as our Western scholars produce histories of Buddhism and Confucianism which appear models of learning and impartiality, why should not some of their adherents return the compliment?

How would the Synoptic Gospels impress a man who read them in a detached way, sympathetically indeed—as works of genius and about genius, and of gigantic importance in the history of religion and civilisation—but yet as an outsider, critically, impartially, without prepossession of environment, education, belief? How would they impress such a man who read them perhaps for the first time after he was grown up?

One sees the advantages of such a position, which is only partially my own; but one also sees the disadvantages. For, first, to be an outsider does not necessarily mean to be a model of all the virtues. The outsider too

has his own prepossessions. His own religious belief may make him unconsciously prejudiced against the other religion he is going to study. He may be incapable, with the best will in the world, of doing it justice, or even of fully understanding it. I bring this charge against many Christian scholars who write about Judaism, and I am only too conscious that they in their turn may have very good reasons for bringing it against me.

And, then, there is something else. It seems to me that in one true sense one can only know a religion from within. Its true secret or secrets, its own joyous and special intimacies, do not reveal themselves to the outsider. He never learns or knows them. Study will not do it. One needs inside familiarity. And, on the other hand, he who leaves a religion, usually forgets its secrets. He who, with whatever honesty or purity of heart, and with whatever enthusiasm of soul and mind, abandons one religion for another, is usually no good judge of the religion he has left. The joyous intimacies vanish from his ken and from his memory. The Protestant convert to Catholicism is usually a bad critic of Protestantism; the Catholic who abandons Catholicism is not the man to whom we should go for the fairest estimate of Catholicism.

The secrets of a religion are not to be learned from its mere literature. Indeed the literature may lead one greatly astray. It may lead one to put the stress upon wrong places, to expect consistency where there is the inconsistency of life, to make false deductions and wrong inferences. The best excellences of a faith, its joys, its loving intimacies, are only for those who are within. But if the insider leaves—if he passes the gate—he can usually remember the aroma no more. He describes a skeleton, and is surprised that it has no life and is all dry bones.

Perhaps, then, no adequate account of any religion can ever be written. If you are within, you cannot be impartial; if you are without, you cannot know.

Both advantages and disadvantages are increased, and, as it were, sharpened and made peculiar, when it is a case of a Christian writing about Judaism, or of a Jew writing about Christianity. The very fact that the two religions have so much in common, and are so closely related to each other, makes the estimate of the elements wherein they differ so difficult for both Christian and Jew. And then there is the special difficulty that the differences represent conflicts. By this I mean that Christianity, for example, may differ from Buddhism, but there have been no fights and troubles and sorenesses

between the two religions in the points where they differ. But in the case of Judaism and Christianity the differences have called forth persecutions, heartburnings, alienations. For the doctrines wherein the Jew has differed from the Christian, he has suffered and died at Christian hands; the doctrines wherein the Christian has differed from the Jew, he has specially regarded as the crown and flower of his faith. Moreover, just where the two religions differ do the intimacies begin. The Cross of Christ, with all which it implies, is a proverbial stumbling-block to the Jew; but no less is the Law with its delights a stumbling-block to the Christian.

But can we not separate the teaching of Jesus from Christianity as a whole, and more especially that teaching as it is represented to us in the Synoptic Gospels? That is what I have attempted to do in these lectures—if only on a very minute scale—and for such a study the stumbling-blocks may be less perilous, inasmuch as a good deal of that teaching moves, as the Jew, at any rate, will usually hold, within a Jewish framework, and is in harmony with some fundamental doctrines of Judaism and with doctrines enunciated by Jewish teachers and seers.

And if it comes to an impartial estimate of that teaching, the Jew has the advantage that he has not to assume that, in some sense

or other, Jesus is always right and his opponents are always wrong. He can realise better than the average Christian that even the Synoptics were compiled by writers unfriendly to Judaism and to the opponents of their hero. He can perceive more readily than average Christians that they make the darkness greater in order to increase the light. On the other hand, he has a special pitfall of his own to avoid—the pitfall of undue depreciation. It is not to be wondered at—it is, at any rate, easily explicable—why such a pitfall exists for him. At first sight it might seem as if a fairly enlightened Jewish critic would be only too glad to join in the general laudation of the teaching of one who was himself a Jew. But then this Jew was the founder of the new, the rival, and very soon the persecuting, creed. The Jew has been told over and over again of the immense superiority of the teaching of the New Testament over the Old. The Gospel has been contrasted with the Law; the preparation with the fulfilment; the imperfect with the perfect. And so the determined effort has been made by the Jew to show that these assumptions of vast superiorities are erroneous and unjustified. The teaching of Jesus has often been regarded less as a whole than as a congeries of isolated texts. Parallels have been sought for those texts, both in the Old Testament and the

Talmud, and parallels have readily been found. The results have been, as I venture to think, often ingenious and telling ; but, upon the whole, the pitfall to which I have alluded has not been avoided. We too often, I fancy, find an estimate of the Gospel teaching which may be summed up in the dictum : "Whatever is new in the teaching of Jesus is not true, and whatever is true is not new." Such a result we may, at the very outset, regard as the probable product of prejudice. It can hardly account satisfactorily for the very existence of Christianity.

On the other hand, the Jew is likely to do better justice to the Synoptic Gospels and to their teaching than to either the Fourth Gospel or the Epistles of Paul. For in the Synoptic Gospels the hostility to Judaism is not pushed to any theoretic extremity. Moreover, the whole point of view is not too widely removed from that of Judaism—at all events, from that of Prophetic Judaism. The Jewish reader or critic moves amid a milieu and an environment which is not wholly unfamiliar to him. The plane of thought is not another. He may realise that he is hearing about the teachings and the life of a would-be reformer of his own faith, and perchance he may hold that—as all religions have their occasional corruptions and sore places—so this reformer too, at least on occa-

sion, put his finger upon them. He may even claim (as he could never possibly do for the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel or for Paul) that the historic Jesus, if the founder of a new religion, belongs also to the older faith—that Judaism, as well as Christianity, may, in a certain sense, regard him as its own.

I hope that these few preliminary observations may show you where, as I think, the advantages of a Jewish estimate of the Gospel may lie, and where, on the other hand, lie its dangers and its difficulties. But you obviously do not come here to learn from me the final truth, and therefore you will not be disappointed. You come from a certain curiosity to hear what a Jew, with all his prejudices and prepossessions, may, nevertheless, have to say.

Perhaps you also think that I may have sources of illustrative information at my command which are not available to Christian writers. I fancy that a really learned Jew, well familiar with the vast Rabbinical literature, might be of interest to you from that point of view. And I have one or two great scholars behind me, so to speak, upon whose help I can rely, men who do not, as most Christian writers do, speak from second hand, or from compilations, but who are minutely acquainted with the whole huge mass of the Talmuds and the Midrashim—men who know their spirit as well as their letter, their inner

as well as their outer meaning and value. But we have to remember that, for our special purpose here, the greatest caution is necessary in using the Rabbinic literature to illustrate—whether by way of contrast or parallel—the statements and teaching, in the Synoptic Gospels. And this for two main reasons. First, because only a very small proportion of that literature tells about the men and the circumstances of the first century of the Christian era. The great mass is later. So both for good as well as for evil, the greatest care must be taken in using the Rabbinic literature to illustrate the Gospels. You can hardly count up the number of rules about the Sabbath in the Mishnah and say, This is what the average Jew of Galilee in A.D. 29 was expected to observe. Nor perhaps can you legitimately quote a hundred passages from the Talmud, showing what joy and delight Sabbath observance was to the writers or speakers, and say, This is how the average Jew of Galilee in A.D. 29 felt about the Sabbath. It needs delicate tact and great caution in order to know what inferences of this kind it is right to make, and what inferences would be wrong. Then, secondly, the problems of the Rabbinic literature are many, and even at this day enough studies have not been made, or adequate monographs written, on several disputed and difficult points. There

are at least two questions intimately connected with the Gospel story—one concerning ritual purity, one concerning the religious condition of the masses of the people—about which controversy among scholars is still acute, and as to which it may possibly happen that the ordinary assumptions of the Christian commentaries and text-books may have to undergo serious and far-reaching modification.[1]

He who is to speak about the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels should, I presume, first of all make a long preface dealing with the sources of these Gospels, their measure of credibility and authenticity, their character and qualities. He should then speak of the way in which they have been edited and of the peculiarities of the editors. He would have to explain how it has come to be almost universally acknowledged that Mark is the oldest of the Gospels as a whole, and the reasons upon which this judgment is based. He would then have to push the inquiry farther back, and discuss not merely when Mark was written, but its antecedents and sources. Were these only oral, or were they also written—literary sources which have now perished? Has our Mark grown out of an *Urmarcus*? Next, he would have to deal with Matthew and Luke. What are their sources for all that they contain over and above what they adopted and adapted

from Mark? He would have to speak at some length about that literary source, common to both of them, from which many of the most important sayings of Jesus appear to be taken—the source which is sometimes called the *Logia*, but which is now so often spoken about as Q.—the first letter of the German word *Quelle*, or source. He would have to discuss the important and complicated question whether Q. was known to, and therefore older than, Mark, and if so, in what form or edition? He would have to discuss the date and origin and character of the supposed special extra source of Luke. Only after such discussions, adequately carried through, could he then ask, How far can we trust Mark for what Jesus is reported to have done and for that which is reported to have befallen him? How far can we trust Matthew and Luke for what Jesus is reported to have said?

But I, for various reasons, cannot touch upon any of these points, though a study of them, for me, as for any other speaker about Jesus, must form the basis of what I am about to say. For all this study of the sources, you must go, as I have gone, to the same authorities, first of all to the sources themselves—the three short documents which together would not fill more than a few columns of the *Times*; and, secondly, to the great scholars and critics whose prolonged and minute in-

vestigation has been productive of many generally accepted results.

Then, after all this description and criticism of the sources was finished, and after the Jesus of Matthew had been, for example, compared with the Jesus of Luke, both with the Jesus of Mark, and all three with the Jesus of their sources—the lecturer, before he attempted to picture and delineate the final Jesus of history—*i.e.* Jesus as he, the speaker, thinks that he really was and lived and taught —should, I suppose, intercalate a long chapter upon the inner and outer circumstances of the time. What was the religion—or should we perhaps say, what were the various religious ideas—among the Jews when Jesus lived and died? What was the social and moral condition of Galilee and Judæa? Who were its teachers, and what did they attempt to teach? And so on. But here, again, I must almost wholly omit so necessary and all-important a chapter. For one thing, there is no time; for another, there is not enough material. The two statements seem to exclude each other, but they do not do so in reality. For where the material is scanty conjectures begin. And with conjectures come necessarily lengthy disputes and interminable arguments. Thus, instead of first describing the environment of the hero before beginning to talk about him, I must mix up the very little that I can say

about environment with the not much that I am able to say about the hero.

What single word best describes the sort of man that Jesus of Nazareth really was? According to Matthew, when Jesus entered Jerusalem all the city was excited, saying, "Who is this?" And the reply was, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee." And when, according to Luke, Jesus, after he had risen from the tomb, met two of the disciples near Emmaus, and asked them about what they had been talking, they replied, "About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." In these sentences we find, I think, the one word, if one word be asked for, which best befits and describes the hero of the Gospels. He was a prophet, even as Mark too repeats that some had said of him, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets." He was the sort of man—under other circumstances and environment—such as seven and six hundred years before him had been Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—yes, also Ezekiel, though some of you doubtless would have preferred me to exclude him. To these men Jesus was spiritually and religiously akin.

Perhaps some one might say, May we not use a more modern word about Jesus? May we not more rightly call him a reformer? Was he not a reformer, preaching against

the evils of his age, preaching a higher religion and a higher morality than his contemporaries knew? Doubtless the single word reformer expresses his activities and objects to some extent, but I fancy that the single word prophet expresses them better and more fully.

Let me start with the special cause for his appearance as teacher and preacher in which cause, as in other respects, he resembles the Prophets. For the Prophets did not feel impelled to speak, simply because there were social or religious evils around them; they opened their mouths because, in their opinion and belief, something was going to happen. It was going to happen because of human wickedness. There was danger ahead—special danger to the sinner and the unrepentant. There was, indeed, redemption ahead too—doom, in fact, was threatened to the wicked, deliverance was promised to the suffering good. Given this impulse to speak — the conviction that something big was going to happen, which they foresaw and foretold—the Prophets became teachers and reformers, sometimes also consolers and comforters, always and in every aspect of their work convinced of divine inspiration, conscious of a message to deliver, and unresting till they had delivered it.[2]

Jesus too believed that something was

going to happen — a big something which would certainly change the face of the world, and this something was going to happen soon. The Kingdom of God, he said and he believed, was at hand ; the Kingdom of God was coming nearer and yet more near, and this Kingdom of God meant, with much else, a great *dénouement* and change. It meant the doom of the wicked and the unrepentant ; it meant the salvation and redemption of the humble, the righteous, the repentant. It meant the beginning of a new world, and when this new world had fully come, there would be, for those who were permitted to see it and to share it, no more sorrow and sighing and sin.

The form and the details of the doom and the deliverance predicted by the Prophets no longer greatly appeal to us. They thought that the end of sin and the triumph of righteousness were coming suddenly, quickly, once and for all. The essence of their hope — the doom of wickedness, the victory of good —is not affected by their errors. Nor is its value. So too may it not be said of Jesus, both as regards the error of form and the abiding value of essence? Just as the general religious and moral teaching of the Prophets is largely independent of their erroneous foreshortenings, so too with Jesus. The end, the *dénouement*, which he predicted would surely come within the lifetime of his hearers,

has not come yet after nigh nineteen hundred years. Nevertheless, in his teaching how men were to prepare themselves for that great catastrophe, for that imminent *dénouement*, which should be to them good or evil, according as they were good or evil when it met them—in his teaching as to what was their right relation to God, what was God's relation to them, or what were their duties to each other—the greatness and originality of Jesus found their expression, and (as in the parallel case of the Prophets) much of permanent worth remained for all subsequent time.

If we ask why or how Jesus came to believe that the Kingdom, with all its vast changes, was so near at hand, we draw near to a mystery of personality which in his case is perhaps peculiarly difficult to solve. Yet we may not be wholly wrong if we surmise that his reasons were, at any rate, partly akin to the reasons which had affected John the Baptist (from whom, perhaps, Jesus had been finally led to the conviction that the Kingdom was soon to be made manifest), and therefore partly akin to the reasons which had impelled to a parallel belief the Prophets of old. There was the oppression of the poor by the rich, the misery caused by the exactions of the tax-collector and the Romans, the unequal distribution of happiness and desert. There was sin, on the one hand, which needed judgment ;

there was sorrow, upon the other hand, which needed deliverance. The proud must be abased ; the poor must be exalted. There was a pretence of goodness (here we strike, I think, a new note) which needed unmasking ; there was hidden goodness which needed bringing to light. God would visit His people, and render unto each as his heart, rather than his outward appearance, might deserve.

If, then, the Judgment and the Kingdom were at hand, it was because the inward moral and religious condition of Israel was not what it should be, as well as because of outward oppression and consequent unhappiness. The two things, though not, perhaps, to the mind of Jesus causally connected *in the same way* as to most of his contemporaries, were nevertheless not without reciprocal relation to each other.

The Prophets of old had also been stirred to speak because of similar reasons. They too denounced Israel's sins ; and they too were strongly moved by the unhappiness and misery which were caused by oppression. And roughly we may say that such oppression was brought about both by the native and the foreigner. To the oldest prophets the special oppression was that of Israelite upon Israelite ; to later prophets there was superadded the oppression of Israel's taskmasters and its foreign rulers.

Both these oppressions again existed in the age of Jesus. There can be no doubt that the oppression of Jew by Jew, of the poor by the rich, so far as it occurred in Galilee and Judæa, moved the sympathy and stirred the anger of Jesus. It is another question—and a far more difficult and delicate one — how far he was moved by the oppression of the foreigner, by the exactions of the Romans. A few of the Prophets may almost be called politicians. Though the word seems wholly inappropriate as applied to Jesus, yet the relation of his teaching and of his own position to the Roman power, raises complicated problems. We may, at any rate, in so far also assimilate and liken him to the Prophets as to say that the condition of his people, the ferment of the time, partly produced by the Roman dominion, were not without their effect upon his own appearance,—in other words, they formed one of the causes of his public mission and activity. Moreover, in the great change which he foresaw and predicted, the power and domination of the Romans would disappear for ever.[3]

But if Jesus resembled the Prophets in the cause and occasion of his preaching, still more did he resemble them in his temper of mind, and therefore in one great feature and characteristic of his teaching. The prophetical temper of mind may be said partly to consist

in a vivid sense for realities, in a keenness of moral and religious vision which pierces through externalities and forms, and sees right through to what is beneath them. The Prophets' tests of goodness and religion are inward tests. They do not care for the outside of religion, they care for its inward essence. It is unnecessary for me to labour this point, which all who have read the prophetical writings even cursorily, can amplify for themselves. From Amos, who cried out, "I hate, I despise your feasts, I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as an everlasting stream"; from Hosea, who declared, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," right down through Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zechariah, right on to Joel—perhaps the latest of the band—with his "Rend your heart and not your garments,"—all, or nearly all, of the Prophets speak predominantly the same message. The inwardness of Jesus, the intense spirituality of his teaching, need not be insisted on here. I only emphasise it now to show his connection and kinship with the Prophets. He takes up and renews their message.

Again, the Prophets were convinced of divine inspiration. They spoke in the name of God, and were positively assured that they were delivering a divine message. They did

not interpret a Book or a Law : they spoke with an immediate authority, which was in one sense within them, for it depended upon no written code or human master ; in one sense without them, for it was believed to have its source in God. To disbelieve their message was to disbelieve God, to accept it was to rally to God's side. Herein, too, did Jesus in his teaching and bearing resemble them.

Once more, the Prophets with their keenness of vision and their intensity of feeling tended to see everything big. Or shall we rather say that they could see more, and see more clearly, than the ordinary run of mankind ? And was it not the same with Jesus ? On the one hand, he could perceive possibilities of good existing within one man whose outward behaviour was, so far, anything but meritorious ; on the other hand, the evil in another man seemed to him something larger and more terrible than it seemed to ordinary eyes. He emphasises and intensifies. What is worth while is intensely worth while, what is good is intensely good, what is bad is intensely bad. Like all the Prophets, he exaggerates. "There is not one just or truthful person in Jerusalem," said Jeremiah ; "There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land," said Hosea. We take these broad statements with a grain of salt. The same sort of qualifications we shall have, I

believe, to make in the denunciations—so far as these may be authentic—of Jesus. If he cries, "Woe upon Scribes and Pharisees," we shall interpret this historically to mean that there were then living *some* very bad Scribes and *some* very bad Pharisees. The tendency of all preachers and social reformers, as well as of all prophets, to exaggerate, is indeed proverbial. This statement would hardly need making were it not, in the case of Jesus and his opponents, so constantly forgotten.

In any case, however, the sins and the sinners of Israel constituted one of the main reasons for the message and the teaching which Jesus was to deliver. And here a crucial point can be expressed in a question. Was the scheme of Jewish religion and morality wrong, according to Jesus, or was it merely the sinners? Was it the system or merely the individuals?

Let me explain what I mean by an illustration. There existed—did there not?—in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries many pious and excellent Roman Catholics who denounced the wickedness of priests and monks and popes, who spoke of the abuse of that which, in its own place and time, was seasonable and good, who declared that the secondary was wrongly made primary, and the primary wrongly made secondary. And, on the other hand, there were men, like Luther and Calvin

and Knox, who went farther—some more slowly, some more fast—and who said that the whole scheme of religion was bad and false, and that it must necessarily tend to produce hypocrisy, externalism, self-righteousness, and sin. We may also observe that some reformers who began by denouncing the individuals ended by denouncing the system. From taking the line that what was essentially holy and divine had been corrupted and abused by man, they ended by denying the divine element in such matters altogether. What was hitherto supposed to be of God was in truth not of God at all.

We have, then, to ask about Jesus: Was he a reformer in the one sense or in the other, or did he take up a line which lay between, and was peculiar to himself?

The religious system which existed in the age of Jesus in Judæa and Galilee is known as legalism—a religious system of which many hard things have been, and constantly still are said.

We cannot understand or appreciate a great part of the teaching of Jesus, and of his conflict with the religious authorities of his time, without first understanding and appreciating the legal religion in which he was born and reared. Yet to understand this legal religion aright a whole lecture or more than one lecture would be required.

I therefore can say only a few words where many are necessary.

Let us, then, call to mind, first of all, that the written basis of the legal religion of the Jews was the so-called Law of Moses—the document which we still possess exactly in the same form as it was possessed by the Jews of the first century, namely, the code of the Pentateuch.

Now, what were the universally accepted beliefs about this Law Book? The universally accepted beliefs were that it was perfect, Mosaic, immutable and divine. There was no suspicion that it had grown up at different times, no attempt to distinguish between human and divine elements, no 'modernisms,' in fact, of any shape or kind. The Law was taken at its own valuation; it was sincerely, even passionately, believed to be the absolute Word of God. This Law is, as we know, an amalgam of ritual and morality. It contains the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," while immediately following that injunction comes the precept, "A garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together shall not come upon thee." Both laws were regarded as equally divine. The Code does not give the smallest indication that one set of laws—the moral laws—was intended for all time, while another set was intended for a

period only. On the contrary, for the ritual laws, quite as much as for the moral laws, it urges that they are to be observed throughout all the generations of Israel, that is, in perpetuity.

You cannot take too strictly the word "divine" as applied to the Law. And what does "divine" imply? It implies that just as God Himself is perfectly wise and good, so is all His Law. Not this injunction or that, but all injunctions, not the moral laws only and not the ritual laws, but all the laws, both moral and ritual, all, without exception, are good and perfect and divine.

Nowhere is the faintest indication given in the Law that any prophet or teacher is to come who shall have the power or authority to criticise or subvert or alter any single injunction in the Law. The last word of prophecy was, "Remember the Law of Moses."

Such then was the universal belief—be it wise, be it foolish, be it strange, be it simple —about the Law.

But in addition to the written Law there already existed a quantity of other laws. These laws were interpretations of the written Law; sometimes they interpreted the written Law in such a way as to increase its scope and multiply its application; sometimes they interpreted it (as in the case of the *lex talionis*)

in a more modern and civilised spirit.[4] All these interpretations were, however, made in the genuine belief that they did not in any way diminish the absolute validity and divineness of the written Law. Some of the older of these laws—all of which, in the age of Jesus, were still oral, that is, they had not yet been written down and codified—were themselves regarded as genuine traditions of extreme antiquity, stretching back even to the Mosaic era.

A divine Law accepted by the whole people as divine. Next remember that this divine Law was regarded as a great glory and distinction. It constituted the nation's pride—its holiest and grandest possession. For the Law the people of Israel were ever ready to die, and for the Law in their thousands they have died.

But it may perhaps be said : Even though the people were proud of their divine Law in their relations with the outsider and the foreigner, and even though, when this national palladium was attacked, or when they were bidden by others to violate its enactments, they were willing to die in its defence, may they not within their own homes have found the Law a burden too great to fulfil ? What you defend and champion over against the outsider, you may nevertheless neglect or dislike in private. One can imagine a

religion which, just because it was intensely national and had become the mark of nationality, was passionately defended when attacked, but was not greatly observed or beloved in seasons of peace. A man might die—we remember the great poem of Sir Alfred Lyall —rather than verbally renounce Christianity who, nevertheless, neither in faith nor practice could legitimately be called a Christian. If the Law was the symbol of Jewish life and nationality, it might conceivably be defended by thousands who themselves hardly knew what it contained and often violated its provisions.

It can then legitimately be asked: Is there any evidence to show that the people did observe the Law and that they liked observing it?

The question is of extreme importance, but I am unable to discuss it here. All I can now do is to put before you some of the current misconceptions or errors about the Law—that is, of course, as they appear to me —and for the sake of brevity and clearness I will put these misconceptions before you in a crude, glaring, and exaggerated form.

The first misconception or error, then, is that the Law, so far as observance is concerned, was not a popular Law, that it was fulfilled and observed by the rich, comfortable and well-to-do classes rather than by

the poor. The masses of the people were ignorant of the Law and violated its precepts. Hence these masses were despised by the well-to-do observers and by all the professional teachers — the Rabbis and Scribes. The Law was so burdensome that, unless you had leisure and a competence, you were unable to observe it. The masses who neglected it were contemned by the professional teachers and by the well-to-do observers. Being neglected and despised, they were either unhappy and despairing—with the uncomfortable feeling that they were outcasts in the sight of God and man, and yet unable to regain respectability and divine approval—or they sank lower and lower in the moral scale, violating the Law and indifferent to its violation. The neglect of ritual laws, and the social ostracism involved, led to the neglect of moral laws as well. Over against the masses who neglected the Law—some indifferent, some despairing—there stood out the professional teachers and their well-to-do friends, proud of their observance and with all the disagreeable faults of an exclusive and predominant class. What they tended to observe were those very ritual and ceremonial enactments which were neglected by the masses. This observance naturally led on to self-righteousness, formalism, and selfishness. It naturally led on to faults still

graver—to a neglect of justice, compassion, humility, and love. Thus the minority who observed the Law, or at any rate the ritual and ceremonial laws, were proud and bad and rich ; the majority who neglected it were poor, unhappy, and despised.

Such, put in crude language and in an extreme form, are the current misconceptions about the Law. The further discussion of the subject I must leave to the next lecture.

## II

## JESUS AND THE LAW

I MENTIONED in my first lecture how in the age of Jesus the belief in a Divine Law was accepted on all hands in the fullest possible sense of the word Divine. I went on to indicate certain misconceptions about that Law, which are still widely current to-day. I cannot prove my counter theory that these misconceptions *are* misconceptions and not dry statements of actual fact. That would need too much time, and, moreover, many of the proofs would be technical and elaborate; very unsuited for lectures. Suffice it to assert that, beyond the New Testament, there is no clear evidence that outside the observers of the Law stood what one great American scholar likes to call the "disinherited masses." [5] On the contrary, the masses were the champions of the Law, and the Law was *their* inheritance; while sprung from the masses, their friends and spokesmen, were the

great majority of the Rabbis. Nor again is there good and clear evidence, beyond the New Testament, that the Law, either to those who observed it, or who sought to observe it, was regarded, not as a distinction and a privilege, but as a grievance, an oppression and a burden. When the early Christian community contrasted the Law of Christ with the Law of Moses, and found freedom in the one and servitude in the other, the ease and comfort and repose of the New Law was unfavourably compared with the burden and anxiety of the Old. But we remember the rule that those who are outside a religion know not its intimacies, and those who have left it forget them. To those within there was no bondage, but freedom. The Rabbis said, "There is no liberty except through the Torah."

I believe, then, that the final result of scholarly investigation will be to confirm my own opinion, or, shall I say, my own prepossessions, namely, that the Law was not merely cared for, or championed, when its sovereignty was endangered by the foreigner, that it was not merely observed by the leisured classes or the well-to-do, but that, upon the whole, it was a popular Law, observed and cared for by the nation at large.

The theory has been brought forward that

the view which I have here indicated is true for the Judaism of, say, A.D. 600, but false for the year 30. In 600 the Law was indeed a delight to all Jews, rich and poor alike ; in 600 all sought to observe it, and most did. But in 30 things were different. Then the Law had not yet become the people's Law : the Rabbis were mostly proud and bad ; the people unhappy and ill at ease. The Law was not yet a delightsome glory ; it was to many but a burden.[6] Now it may indeed be that the percentage of bad Rabbis in 30 was greater than the percentage of bad Rabbis in 600. There is some evidence for this, though not very much. But, as a whole, the theory—invented, I cannot help thinking, to save the accuracy of some of the sweeping statements in the Gospels—breaks down. And please remember this, that the additions of the Oral Law were much greater, more fully worked out and more universally accepted in 600 than in 30. If, on account of its bulk and the number of its enactments, the Law was a burden in 30, much more should it have been a burden in 600. If on account of its legalism, the Jewish religion in 30 possessed the various supposed evils which I mentioned last time, much more should it have possessed them in 600. For if the religion was legal in 30, still more was it legal—intensely legal—in 600. You cannot

therefore have it both ways. If the Law, as such, produced evils in 30, much more should it have produced them in 600. But if there were evils in 30 which did not exist in 600, these evils can hardly have been the direct outcome of the Law. The new theory, it may be observed in passing, seems to save the accuracy of certain judgments attributed to Jesus by throwing over a leading doctrine of Paul.

Next, one word as to the number of enactments. The life of the ordinary peasant, day labourer, artisan, was chiefly interfered with, if I may use the word, by the Law in two ways : first, by the laws about food ; secondly, by the laws about the Sabbath. Now the laws about food, for people who lived among themselves and did not travel, were easily understood and afforded no great practical difficulties. To abstain from hares and rabbits and pigs and lobsters had doubtless become as easy and obvious as for us to abstain from dogs and cats and horses. Then again, that the oxen, sheep, and goats have to be killed in a particular way is no trouble to those who eat the flesh which they buy. Lastly, even if the laws about milk and meat were already in full force in 30, so long as people living together all do the same thing, there is really no very great trouble in not eating milk, butter, or cheese with meat or poultry. There

is some trouble for the women, but even for them the rules are easily learned and are not very difficult to obey. And in the East, you have to remember how many days there are in which the family lives entirely on a simple, vegetarian diet.

The Laws about the Sabbath were already minute, but nevertheless there is reason to believe that to most Jews the Sabbath in 30 was rapidly becoming what it undoubtedly was in 600—a day of delight. After all, to get a full twenty-four hours off all possible labour is no small boon. The Rabbis discussed with delight—I do not defend this form of mental gymnastics and casuistry—all the endless petty things and details which might or might not be performed upon the Sabbath, but as the result of their discussions and determinations filtered down among the people, they were, I fancy, gradually absorbed without very great or agitating difficulties. I do not say that the rules about Sabbath observance, even so far as they had been worked out in 30, would not be irksome to you or me,—we might fret over them, perhaps disobey them, and then with seared consciences feel that we had transgressed the divine Law, —but I much doubt whether for the great majority of the people in Israel in 30 this was in any sensible degree the case. There were too few exceptions to make the burden

felt, and there were too many compensations upon the other side which tended to make the Sabbath day a privilege and a pleasure—no work and better food being two among the number.

Do you say, But what about the laws of ritual purity? Was not every good Jew always trying not to become unclean? And was not the very fact that so many persons could not help becoming unclean the reason why there was a cleavage between the few rich people, or the professionals who *could* keep clean, and the masses who had to become unclean? Once unclean, did they not, more or less to their own despair, fall out of the legal ranks, and become despised and avoided by the keen ritual purists? Here we have the theory of the orthodox few and the degraded outside many turning up again under a new form. This new form, however, —though the matter is still not wholly determined—is probably not much truer than the old form. The matter is desperately difficult and complicated, and I cannot possibly enter upon its discussion here; indeed I personally am not qualified to enter upon its discussion anywhere. But so far as I can ascertain, ritual or Levitical purity did not greatly affect the lives of the ordinary peasant or artisan—that is to say, he had not to be in constant anxiety not to become ritually or

Levitically unclean. He might become unclean. He had not to trouble himself if he touched a dead mouse. Ritual purity was the special concern and trouble of the priests and of a few rigorists who voluntarily determined to live as priests ; it was also necessary for the layman to be ritually clean upon the few occasions when he visited the Temple in Jerusalem. The great mass of the people, including most of the Rabbis, had not to concern themselves practically with such questions for at least nineteen-twentieths of their lives. It is true that the habit of washing the hands before a meal was coming in, but it can hardly be said that this custom, or precept as it gradually became, was a very considerable burden. Most of us keep it up even at the present day, and do not think ourselves slaves in bondage for doing so.

But the worst of a wrong polemical theory is that it tends to make those who oppose it exaggerate in their turn. We must not forget two things—one general and one particular. The particular thing is that, both in Judæa and in Galilee, there must have been many religious and moral evils in A.D. 30—a great deal, that is, for a reformer and a prophet to denounce and to lament. What society has ever been without them? And the general thing is that there is no religion which has not the defects of its qualities.

There is none which has not its own peculiar evils, its own peculiar dangers. Jewish legalism is no exception to the rule. First of all comes the obvious danger of putting the ceremonial above the moral. It is easy to be strict about food and drink and cooking, and washing one's hands; it is harder to be humble and loving and sweet-tempered. Again, there is the danger of self-righteousness and formalism; many laws are negative; it is comparatively easy to keep them. A man may have observed many laws, and in his pride may think that he has observed the whole Law; it may be but a poor, negative, formal, limited, and outward sort of morality and religion to which he has attained, and yet he may thank God for his own excellence and that he is not as other men. The picture of the Pharisee in Luke's parable—a *ludicrous* caricature of the average Pharisee, a *monstrous* caricature of the Pharisaic ideal—may yet be true enough of one particular perversion of the Pharisaic religion. And why should there not have been several living examples of such a perversion in the days of Jesus? All that I beg of you to remember is that you can have (and still do have in many Jewish circles) a combination of the purest and most saintly piety with the most careful and minute observance of every detail of the ceremonial law.

Lastly, among the dangers of legalism may sometimes be—though here the ground is more delicate and difficult—a certain occasional hopelessness and unhappiness. The Law was a popular Law : it was the people's Law rather than the aristocrats'. Nevertheless there probably existed a submerged tenth who, both for moral and ritual reasons, violated the Law, and were despised and avoided because of their violation. There may also have been a few who would have wished to obey or to return to their obedience, but who, whether from their occupation (such as tax-collecting), or because they received no encouragement, were yet unable to do so. The gulf between them and respectability had become too wide to be bridged over. And once they had fallen out of the ranks, it may well be that none of the respectables was willing to hold out to them a hand.

I must not anticipate, but you will easily realise what this remark is to lead up to. It was the distinction and the original greatness of the teacher of Nazareth that he did want to hold out a hand, and that he did actually hold it out—the hand of sympathy, of encouragement, of redemption.

We have also to remember that among the sores of the age, quite apart from the defects of religious legalism, we have surely to reckon a certain amount of oppression of the poor by

the rich, such as existed so much more prominently and widely in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Like the great majority of the Rabbis, who, be it understood, received no payment for their studies or teaching, and were mainly drawn from the poorer classes, Jesus too was a man of the people. Like the great majority of the Rabbis, he stood for the poor against the rich, and a certain, almost prejudiced, opposition to the rich and well-to-do as such which we can discern in the Gospels was, in all probability, a characteristic of the historic Jesus. But the rich are not to be identified with the legalists; on the contrary, a good proportion of those who were outside the Law were rather rich than poor. Yet it is easy to see how, in view of after events, and through the opposition of the Synagogue to the primitive Church, all those whom Jesus reprimanded and all those who opposed him soon became supposed to be without exception supporters and champions of the Law.

The temperament of Jesus, his "prophetic" temperament, if I may call it so, led him, then, to attack, just as Amos and Isaiah attacked, oppression and hypocrisy. Cruelty and formalism were an abomination to him; these were the sins for which the Judgment was soon to come. To him, as to Micah, what the Lord required was to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.

Here I will recall to you the question I put last time. Did Jesus attack the sinners, or also the scheme of religion which produced them? Did he attack the individuals, or also the system?

The truth seems to be that the attack upon individuals, or upon certain *results* of the system which seemed to him wrong and improper, led him on half-unconsciously to an attack, or at all events to an *implied* attack, upon the system itself. Here, at all events, just at this point, there came the struggle and the conflict—the inward conflict (which we may perhaps infer, though we are not allowed to see it) and the outward conflict, which Mark and the other Synoptists are only too anxious to put before us.

When Amos and Hosea and Isaiah spoke, there was no universally recognised Divine and Mosaic Law. When Jesus spoke, there was. Hosea said, in God's name, "I desire lovingkindness and not sacrifices." There was no possible retort—"But in the Law of God, which you, like everybody else, acknowledge to be perfect, immutable, and divine, sacrifices are required in large numbers." In the age of Jesus it is true that the words of the prophet were still supposed to be authoritative and divine, but they had to be interpreted or explained away (as they are to this day) in the light of a still more authori-

tative and still diviner document, the Pentateuchal Law.

Jesus takes up the prophetic message under conditions which did not exist when the greatest of the Prophets declaimed their most specifically prophetic doctrine. The conflict—both the inward and the outward conflict—was therefore almost inevitable. In the face of the Law which makes no clear distinction between morality and ceremonialism, but demands them both with equal insistence and equal authority, how could a new teacher enunciate afresh the doctrines of the Prophets, in direct application to the conditions and life of his time, without coming at least very near to a conflict with the letter of the Law?

In the days of Jesus in Galilee there was indeed no question of sacrifices; these were only offered in the distant Temple at Jerusalem, whither people only made occasional pilgrimages. In everyday life sacrifices were replaced by the laws about the Sabbath, or the laws about food. It was in connection with these sections of the Law—very important sections, moreover, as we have already observed—that the conflict started and grew sore. It began with the Sabbath.

Jesus, with his pure prophetic intensity, was indignant that any ritual law should stand in the way of executing immediately—directly

the occasion offered—the higher law of compassion and lovingkindness. The rule of the Rabbis was that, except when there was danger to life, no healing operation might be conducted upon the Sabbath. They said, like Jesus—at least, one of them did—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," but they strictly limited the application of that principle. Suppose a person was paralysed, and you felt you could cure him. It would not matter, argued the Rabbis, if he were paralysed one more day. It was not a question of life and death. It will do just as well if you heal him on Sunday instead of on Saturday. Jesus, on the other hand, was filled with indignation at such an argument. The law of love was higher than the ritual law, and must immediately be fulfilled.

We can, I think, see that dialectically the Rabbis were in the right. The examples given by Jesus in the Gospels do not prove his point, for they involve the question of life and death, or, at any rate, excessive cruelty to animals, a point on which the Rabbis were extremely sensitive. But we can also perceive that Jesus was in the right too, and that his right was higher and more permanent than the dialectical right of the Rabbis. Jesus seems fighting for a principle which he can hardly enunciate or formulate: either, that

deeds of love and charity must never be put off for the sake of ritual enactments; or, perhaps, that the rule and rest of the Sabbath must be interpreted by its spirit, and by the higher law of righteousness and compassion.

It is also possible that Jesus, in his conflicts with the Rabbis about the Sabbath, may have said, "I recognise that the Pentateuchal Law of the Sabbath is divine, but what I deny is the authority and divineness of your interpretations and additions. To heal is not to work; to crush or pick ears of corn is not to work!" That is to say, Jesus would have upheld, or rather would not have touched, the validity of the *written* Pentateuchal Law; what he would have attacked was the interpretation put upon the Law of God by human commentators and casuists.

It is, indeed, likely enough that the conflict against the Law began here. Jesus probably realised the absurdity of many of the regulations about the Sabbath into which the Rabbis, in their mistaken zeal and too eager legalism, had unfortunately been led. There is some evidence that this was the case; Jesus may have feared that the very spirit and object of the Sabbath were likely to be crushed out by such casuistical details. Rules would destroy principles.

But the conflict went farther than the Sabbath, and farther than the additional enact-

ments of the Rabbis. Jesus was compelled to take up a certain attitude towards the Mosaic Law itself, and this attitude was novel and even revolutionary. In other words, Jesus was driven on, by the inner necessities of his prophetic temperament, and by the conditions and facts which he saw around him, to advance half-unconsciously from an attack upon *persons* and upon certain things which they did, to an attack upon the *system*, or upon certain parts of the system, on the basis or authority of which those things were done. We hear of three matters over which, besides the Sabbath, keen conflicts arose, but one of these three is too difficult, doubtful, and intricate to be alluded to here.[7] Of the remaining two the first concerns divorce.

The originality of Jesus seems strikingly shown in his treatment of women. We know that women were among the most devoted of his supporters, and from this and other evidence we may infer that Jesus appears to have rebelled against that more Oriental view of women which is indicated or expressed in certain passages of the Law. He also rebelled against that false form of chastity which spurns and crushes the sinner instead of only spurning and crushing the sin. A noble feature in his character was his desire to redeem and convert, and he did not leave outside of his redeeming activities

the adulteress and the harlot. His championship of womanhood and her rights led him to ponder over that great sore of Oriental life, the law of divorce. According to the Pentateuchal Law, a man can put away his wife, but a woman cannot put away her husband. Moreover, the somewhat indistinct language of the 24th chapter in Deuteronomy, in which the rule about divorce occurs, allowed and made room for the interpretation—too greatly in accordance with prevailing views of many Eastern peoples—that the woman could be divorced for a variety of reasons over and above direct infidelity. There is a conflict of evidence and opinion as to the exact line which Jesus took up on the question. Some think that, like Rabbi Shammai, his predecessor, he declared that divorce must be limited to adultery. A man must not send his wife away, unless she had been unfaithful to him. It is, however, also possible, and, perhaps, more probable, that he went farther, and declared himself against all divorce whatever and on whatever ground.

In any case he was apparently rebuked by the Rabbis for running counter to a Mosaic Law. For the divine Mosaic Law permits divorce, or even, it might be said, under certain circumstances, ordains it. According to Mark, Jesus was induced by stress of con-

flict between his own ideal morality and the letter of the Law to utter the striking principle, "For the hardness of your heart Moses wrote you this commandment." Here again we see that from one point of view the Rabbis were right and Jesus was wrong, but that from another and higher point of view Jesus was once more right—prophetically right in both senses of the word "prophetic."

There is nothing in the Law to indicate that any law is a concession; nothing to indicate that each law is not what it declares itself to be, absolute in itself, and in itself, even as its Author, changeless, perfect, and divine. And yet we know, first, that the Mosaic law of divorce was really a limitation, if not a concession; and, secondly, that the Law was, in considerable portions of it, a sort of compromise with old, popular customs of heathen origin. Thus here again we see Jesus taking a modern, and also a prophetic, view about the Law; he is right from a world-historic and universal standpoint, even though from a narrower and literal standpoint his opponents too had their temporary justification. Neither could understand the other; perhaps Jesus in a certain sense could hardly understand himself. The Law was divine; he did not dream of disputing this theoretically. But there was something still more divine—the inspiration of his thoughts

and words as, in the stress and strain of the moment, the Divine Spirit seemed to suggest them to his mind.

Even a further step in contradiction to the Law was Jesus constrained to go. This further step concerned the very important question of food. For there was no point on which the Rabbis laid more emphasis, and none in which the Law touched everyday life more directly, than the regulations about food, what one might eat and what one must avoid. The Gospel gives no very clear record of the conflict between Jesus and the Rabbis on this grave subject, and what it does say apparently contains editorial additions. Yet it seems the more probable that here too, in the stress and heat of conflict, Jesus—the spiritual descendant and successor of Amos and Isaiah—uttered a principle which was, on the one hand, as most of us would agree to-day, superbly true, and, on the other hand, was in direct violation of the letter and the implication of the Law. The conflict, we are told, arose on the question of washing the hands before meals. Jesus, as I have already mentioned, did not observe this comparatively recent regulation. He went on, however, in justifying his neglect, to lay down a principle of much greater range and sweep. The conflict started with a new Rabbinical regulation; the *principle* included a whole

number of ordinances in the Mosaic Law. Jesus said: "Nothing outside a man, entering into him, can make him unclean; only the things which come out of a man—these are what make him unclean." Whether Jesus had directly in view the distinction of foods mentioned in Leviticus is uncertain. It is improbable that he deliberately meant to say (as the compiler of Mark supposes), "I formally abrogate the Mosaic ordinances about food; all you, my disciples, may freely eat pig and lobster and hare." [8] But the acute and trained Rabbis could easily see the significance and implication of the utterance. The Law had ordered that Israelites were not to defile themselves by eating certain animals, which are, it said, unclean to them, and an abomination. This was a matter over and above merely priestly or Levitical purity. Every Israelite for all time was to avoid eating rabbits and pigs, lobster, and hares; to eat them defiled in a totally different sense from the touching of a dead mouse, which only affected the priest. To eat forbidden food was a direct violation of God's Law, and the defilement it caused affected all men alike, both priest and layman, at every season and in every place. But if Jesus's principle was true, then the Law was wrong. There was no material thing which was unclean, or which could make a

man unclean, in any religious sense. In the religious sense there was no uncleanness except sin. Nothing could defile a man religiously except his own consciously committed sin.

It was a noble, a liberating utterance. When we remember the immense burden which material conceptions of clean and unclean had imposed upon humanity in earlier primitive religions; when we think of these conceptions in their relation not merely to food, but to the sexual life, or to intercourse between the members of one faith and race and the members of another; or when we bear in mind the many troubles of the priesthoods and all the vanities of priestly purity—can we laud too highly, can we appreciate too gratefully, the grand and prophetic principle that only that which comes out of a man can make him unclean? *Things* cannot defile *persons*. The spiritual personality can only be spiritually defiled.

Yet highly as we may rate the religious excellence of the saying, entirely as we may sympathise with the doctrine, it is impossible not to realise that, given the divinity and perfection of the Law, the utterance of Jesus could not be regarded as either true or inspired. In some of its enactments the Law embodies and rests upon that very primordial conception of material religious uncleanness from which

the principle laid down by Jesus so triumphantly sets men free. If the principle is right, the Law is wrong. If the Law is right, the principle is wrong. Assume, as all the Rabbis did, that God Himself was the author of the Law, and its inerrancy follows as a matter of course. Jesus, therefore, from this point of view, was wrong, his principle was wrong, and to lay down such a principle was presumptuous and improper. Once again we see that both parties were right, and that neither could understand the other. Logically and consistently, the right was on the side of the Rabbis ; universally, ultimately, and religiously, the right was on the side of Jesus.

Let me here utter a warning against an easily acquired misconception. You are not to understand that the Rabbis did not realise that the moral laws were more important than the ceremonial laws. In spite of the fact that the Law often seems to put the two sets of laws upon a level, they realised this quite well. On this point or principle there would have been no real difference of opinion. Jesus, we may suppose, if we please, stated the case more cogently and brilliantly than his predecessors or contemporaries, but in the principle itself there was nothing revolutionary. When, for instance, Jesus said, " On the two commandments, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' and ' Thou shalt

love thy neighbour as thyself,' hang the whole Law and the Prophets," he was saying nothing which the Rabbis would have disapproved of. Or, again, though the positive form of the Golden Rule may be much superior to the negative form, still, when Jesus uttered it, he uttered nothing which would have produced conflict, irritation, or dissent. There is a famous passage in the Talmud, for instance, which is quoted again and again, how Moses gave 613 precepts to Israel, and how successive teachers and prophets reduced the 613 to fewer and fewer commands till, finally, Amos (as one form has it), or Habakkuk (as another form has it), reduced them to one. But no practical deductions were made from such statements in the direction of abandoning one single ceremonial enactment. However much the good sense and the religious feeling of the Rabbis may have led them to realise that to "love mercy" was more important than to abstain from eating rabbits, it would not have entered their heads to argue that so long as you were merciful and loving you might be allowed to eat them. The ceremonial laws, no less than the moral laws, were the command of the all-wise and perfect God ; they, too, like their author were perfect and beautiful, and no sentence is more frequently on the lips of the Rabbis than this that in the multiplicity of the laws which He has

given unto the Israelites, God has shown them His goodness and crowned them with honour. The Rabbis would have agreed with that other saying of Jesus, which is perhaps of doubtful authenticity, that while the moral enactments are to be obeyed, as the weightier matters of the Law, first and foremost, the others, the ceremonial enactments, are also by no means "to be left undone." Any utterance, still more any action, on the part of Jesus, which seemed to indicate that the smallest enactment of Leviticus need not be faithfully obeyed, or carried out to the letter, was bound to produce conflict, contradiction, and scorn.

I have said that every religion has the defects of its qualities, and to the defects of legalism Jesus seems to have been peculiarly sensitive, for these defects were just such as would have aroused the wrath of the Prophets, whose temper and point of view Jesus so vividly reproduced. Indeed, the sins which Jesus specially denounced (whether connected or not connected with legalism) were often substantially the same sins which Amos and Isaiah had themselves reproved. But, as I have already observed, Jesus did not merely content himself with reproving and denouncing, though for certain persons and for certain sins—cruelty, formalism, and hypocrisy—he does seem to have had little else than denuncia-

tion. He called to repentance, and he called to repentance not merely by announcing doom and condemning sinners and their sin, but by means more personal, novel, and conciliatory.

I do not think that he was always consistent. He urged his disciples to love their enemies, but so far as we can judge he showed little love to those who opposed him. He urged that the lost sheep should be actively sought out; but except in the way of sheer abuse and bitter vituperation, he did nothing to win over to his own conception of religion the Pharisees and Rabbis who ventured to criticise and dislike him. To the hardest excellence of all even Jesus could not attain. For it was far easier for him to care for the outcast than to care for his opponent, especially when the outcast was ready to acknowledge that he was sent and inspired by God, and the opponent took the liberty of denying it. Thus the outcast was a "little one" whom God sought to save; the opponent was an offspring of vipers and a child of perdition. For it is only God, the Father of us all, who has no opponents; even the best of His messengers, inspired though they be, ever remain within their human limitations, far removed from the perfection of the Divine. And here too, in this human weakness and limitation, Jesus again resembles the

Prophets; the Jewish critic recalls Jeremiah, and can cast no stone at the teacher from Nazareth. But nevertheless we are bound to note that of those whom he denounced many, in all probability, did not deserve his censure. So far, however, as others were guilty of sin, it was the self-righteous formalist, the proud and sanctimonious observers of the ceremonial enactments of the Law, who either neglected, or but formally and negatively obeyed its moral commandments, that found no mercy at his hands. To them, except in the way of stern rebuke and vigorous vituperation, he was no physician. For these special failures of legalism he had no pity; he forgot that they too, however sinful, were created, like himself, in the image of God; that they too, like himself, were sons of the same divine Father, and that the same sun shone upon them as upon himself. But what reformer or prophet, in the intensity of his zeal, is consistent? We must not expect consistency from Jesus, and we must not be surprised that in his language towards his opponents—if its authenticity be assumed—we can convict him of inconsistency out of his own mouth.[9]

But there were other sinners and unfortunates besides the formalist, the oppressor, and the hypocrite. There were the men and the women whom Rabbis and Jesus alike would have agreed to call sinners; there were,

perhaps, as we have seen, a few others, though this is more doubtful, who were sinners in the eyes of the Rabbis, but not in their own, or sinners *both* in the eyes of the Rabbis *and* in their own, but who yet were *not* sinners in the eyes of Jesus. Jesus was not merely the "collective" prophet, if I may use such a term, like Amos or Hosea. He was also the individualist prophet—the seeker of souls—like Ezekiel. He was the prophet, the teacher, for the afflicted and the unhappy. "I will seek"—such was one side of his mission—"I will seek," as Ezekiel had said of God, "that which is lost, and will bring again that which is driven away, and will bind up that which is broken, and will strengthen that which is sick."

This redeeming activity was, I believe, a new thing—at all events as practised with the methods and the intensity of Jesus. Just because he was himself not a sinner, he did not keep himself to himself and avoid contact with those who sinned. The tax-collector and the harlot on the one side, the leper and the possessed upon the other, those whose professions or bodily states bore the hall-mark of their sins, he was ready to encourage and to heal. He was moved towards them by a divine compassion, as tender as it was efficacious. I do not think that one or two passages of dubious import are enough to make us

hold that he did not share the common view that demoniac possession (in which Jesus, like his contemporaries, in this inferior to the prophets, firmly believed), or leprosy, or paralysis, was not the result of previous sin ; but in any case he felt sure that those afflicted with these calamities could not only, by the power which God had given him, be freed from their affliction (and his healings were undoubtedly many and startling), but that they could be induced and encouraged to live better and purer lives. God was ready, through His messenger, to pardon their sins, to release them from the punishment—that is, the affliction—which those sins had received, and to help them by His grace and goodness, to receive a place in the coming Kingdom of Heaven.[10]

Nothing seems to have produced greater murmuring and scorn among his opponents than the attitude of Jesus towards sinners, though we are left to conjecture in most cases who exactly these sinners were. They saw him actually sitting at table,—and a meal still retained something of a sacred character,—actually eating and drinking with "tax-collectors and sinners." He did not mind being touched by a harlot, prophet though he was. He knew that his own purity could not be defiled. The harlot's touch produced in him no evil desire ; he did

not hate her sin the less because he longed to heal the sinner. He sought for the outcast and the afflicted ; such people were not afraid to consort with him ; they were drawn to him by his sympathy, but drawn to him not to continue, but to abandon their sin. He was the "friend of sinners." Surely Jesus has received no grander or more glorious title to fame than these words, coined in mockery and opprobrium, which recoiled upon the heads of those who framed them.

The Rabbis attached no less value to repentance than Jesus. They sang its praises and its efficacy in a thousand tones. They, too, urged that God cared more for the repentant than for the just who had never yielded to sin. They, too, welcomed the sinner in his repentance. But to *seek out* the sinner, and, instead of avoiding the bad companion, to choose him as your friend in order to work his moral redemption, this was, I fancy, something new in the religious history of Israel. The methods which Jesus sometimes adopted for the cure of sin were original and startling. It does not follow that in a lesser man these methods would be either justified or successful. It is not every one who can imitate Jesus, and without harm to himself and with benefit to his companions become the friend of sinners.

Jesus seems (upon the slender evidence we have) to have perceived the good lurking

under the evil. He could quench the evil and quicken the good by giving to the sinner somebody to admire and to love. He asked for service, and put it in the place of sin. The hatefulness of his past life was brought vividly to the mind of the sinner as the antithesis of his new affection and of his loving gratitude. It was, doubtless, often a daring method ; even with Jesus it may not always have been successful. But it inaugurated a new idea : the idea of redemption, the idea of giving a fresh object of love and interest to the sinner, and so freeing him from his sin. The rescue and deliverance of the sinner through pity and love and personal service—the work and the method seem both alike due to the teacher of Nazareth.

## III

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I SPOKE in my last lecture of Jesus in his capacity as comforter and healer. Perhaps we may say that Jesus was the more eager to help and save all who were willing to listen to his words, because of the shortness of the time which was left, because of the immensity of the difference of the lot which was so soon to separate the saved from the lost, the chosen from the rejected. Both when he comforts, and when he denounces, he does so with the more or less conscious background in his mind of the great coming change. The end of the old order is imminent. A new order is at hand. When this change has taken place, when the intervening period has passed by, those who will then be living upon a renovated earth will be living in the Kingdom of God. The intervening period will be one of terror and alarm; a sifting and a judgment will occupy its most crucial stage; and, as the

result of these, some will enter permanent happiness, while others will be condemned to annihilation or abiding gloom.

The conceptions which Jesus held of the Judgment and of the Kingdom of God have been the subject of interminable debate. In these lectures, however, I propose to speak of them very briefly. I must not give a false picture of the teaching of Jesus as a whole by exaggerating or unduly emphasising some particular features of it, but, if I avoid this danger, I may, I think, not unjustifiably dwell mainly upon such features as seem to me both new and good in themselves, and still valuable for us to-day, rather than on those which do not so clearly possess these characteristics. So far as the Judgment and the Kingdom are concerned, while the doctrine itself is central and gravely significant, the form in which it was held is of very secondary importance. Moreover the doctrine, however central and significant, was, nevertheless, though pressed and emphasised by Jesus, yet not created by him or even considerably changed.

I range myself with those for whom the Kingdom of God, as Jesus used it, meant almost invariably, if not always, something eschatological; something which was about to happen, which indeed, from one point of view, one might describe as beginning or having begun, but something which, in its

fullness and completion, was not already *there*. The Kingdom, as Jesus used the term, was not something within a man; it was without him; it was a condition of the world, a state, of which his own beatitude would indeed form a part, but which was primarily something given, something striven for, something social and general, rather than something purely individualistic and personal.[11] Where the Kingdom seems identified with an existing community, or where, if anywhere, it seems that it must mean a process or state within the soul, there I hold that the historic Jesus is no longer speaking to us his own words.

What was the Jewish conception in the days of Jesus of the Messianic Kingdom or the Kingdom of God? It almost seems absurd to put so large and complicated a question in order to answer it in a few general sentences, but I must try my best. Putting the person of the Messiah entirely on one side, I think we may say that the Jewish conception included what we may loosely call a national and material element, and a religious and spiritual element, and that these two elements were closely welded and united together. It is only we who separate them in our analysis. In the Kingdom of God the Jews would be emancipated from their foreign overlords and oppressors;

they would be happy and prosperous for evermore. This does not sound a very religious conception, and it is often regarded and stigmatised as material and political and particularistic and national, with many other disagreeable adjectives. But it was never held by any decent teacher in this sort of artificial isolation. Happiness and prosperity, yes—these would indeed be marks of the Kingdom, but not these alone; we must add to them peace and justice and righteousness and the knowledge of God. These additions surely make a vast difference to the picture.

Two other points must be briefly alluded to. First of all, are those who are to live in the Kingdom, or under the rule of God, just ordinary human beings of flesh and blood, and will they always continue so? Here the conceptions were still floating; some persons supposed that the Messianic Kingdom would last long, but nevertheless end. Only at its close would come the resurrection of the dead and the final Judgment, and after that another and eternal Kingdom of a more spiritual kind. Others, again, combined the two Kingdoms together, and conceived of an existence half material, half spiritual. There might indeed be eating and drinking, but there would and need be no marriage or bearing of children, for men and women would be immortal. This was the more general and widely spread

view. But with these conceptions, and confused with them, there was the more individualistic conception of "Heaven." Immediately after death the righteous would go to a place of happiness, and enjoy beatitude. How they fared at the coming of the Kingdom, how they joined their righteous brethren upon the renovated world, whether they and their environment descended from above to form a new and less material earth—all these are questions to which different answers can be picked out from the apocalyptic and rabbinic literature, but which, as it seems to me, though huge books have been written about them, have little interest or value for us today. They are but dreams and visions; vain and vague pictures of an unknowable to be.

All that we need concern ourselves to remember is that the Messianic age—the world to come—meant prosperity and happiness; righteousness and peace; the knowledge of God, and his realised presence within the saintly and joyful community.

Secondly, we must remember that the doctrine of the Messianic age meant an indomitable optimism and a quenchless faith in the goodness and supremacy of God. The Golden Age was not put in the past; it was projected into the future. To the higher minds it also meant spirituality, and it meant this very much more since the new doctrine

of the resurrection had become the generally accepted dogma of the synagogue. For though the risen dead are to live upon the earth, it is a new earth with new conditions upon which they live. Among the higher minds the stress was laid, not upon the outward and the material, but upon the inward and the spiritual. Righteousness and peace and the knowledge of God became more important elements in the felicity of the Golden Age than flocks and herds and territory and dominion.

Again, the doctrine of the Kingdom of the Messianic age, as Father Tyrrell has so strikingly explained in his last posthumous book, meant something other than a mere belief in gradual progress. It meant a regular break and cleavage from the conditions of the present. It meant a belief in a transcendent world, in a world where there will be no progress because the end has been attained—for it stood, as Father Tyrrell has said, "for an order of transcendental experience, in which sorrow, pain, temptation, and sin shall be done away."[12] It meant a belief that God could and would suddenly, and one might almost say violently, create a new world, not through human co-operation, not through human achievement, but by His own power, His own will, His own goodness, and for His own sake and glory as much as for the sake

and glory of Israel. Many of these things for which the doctrine stood were due not merely to the doctrine itself, but to the fact that the doctrine was now combined with the other doctrines, not originally native to it, of the resurrection of the dead and of spiritual immortality. The Messianic age before these doctrines arose was something much more earthly and material than it was afterwards. It then became more religious, more spiritual, more transcendent.

But, lastly, how about the non-Jews? How about the Romans and the Empire? Far be it from me to deny that the particularistic note predominates. Judaism never completely broke through its nationalist limitations. I do not for a moment suppose, if you had asked any respectable Rabbi of the age of Jesus, that he would have said that in the Kingdom of God the heathen would be ruled over by the Jews in the same way as the Jews were then ruled over by the heathen. But he might have said that an enormous proportion of the heathen would be annihilated at the Judgment, and that the rest would acknowledge the truth and sovereignty of the God of Israel. The heathen would become converted to the true God—allies, perhaps tributaries, of the chosen people. The universalistic predictions of the old Prophets were not forgotten; but some teachers

dwelt upon them more, and others dwelt upon them less. There was no general agreement.

Thus the Jewish conception of the Kingdom in the days of Jesus was still a floating one. Undoubtedly, however, it did include a strong nationalistic element.

> "Who shall blame,
> When the slaves enslave, the oppressed ones o'er
> The oppressor triumph for evermore!"

Your turn in this world, our turn in the next. I do not deny that there has always been, up to modern times, a good deal of this. But there has also always been the conviction that many gentiles will come to the knowledge of the true God and will be gathered under the wings of the *Shechinah*. The righteous of all nations shall have a share in the world to come; this, too, is a Rabbinic doctrine which, though doubtless more often quoted to-day than in antiquity, was never entirely ignored.

The religious danger of the nationalist element in the conception was not, however, confined to its particularism. The danger lay in the confident expectation that because of their mere race and genealogy all Israelites, except a few outrageous sinners and apostates, would assuredly find their places in the world to come. It was this danger against which John the Baptist protested. "Say

not within yourselves we have Abraham for our father." It was against this false and irreligious confidence, which could so easily lead to careless living and odious sins, far more than against any theoretic particularism, that Jesus directed his protest. It was here that he took up again the part of Amos and the Prophets.

It is natural to ask whether the teaching of Jesus brought many other changes into the Jewish conceptions of the Kingdom. I do not think that it did, or at any rate that we can say so with any certainty. To Jesus too, as to his contemporaries, the scene, the *locale*, of the Kingdom appears to be a renovated earth, and though the members of the Kingdom do not marry or beget children and bear them, they yet, as Loisy has pointed out, have bodies of flesh and bones, nor is it a mere metaphor that they are conceived as assembling at a banquet and drinking of a new and purer wine.[18]

More important is the question whether Jesus thought that those who would be admitted into the Kingdom would be many or few. The evidence is a little conflicting, but we have no reason to believe that Jesus shrank back, as most of us would shrink back to-day, from the awful conception that a very large number of those living upon the earth when the Judgment, which ushered in

the Kingdom, arrived, and a very large number of those who rose from the dead, would be permanently excluded from the beatitudes of the New Order. "Broad is the way that leads to destruction: many there be that enter in thereby: strait the way which leads to life: few they be that find it." This passage, and others like it, are not exotic growths upon the teaching of Jesus; they are, I fear, part of its genuine structure. Moreover—and this is a very important point—repentance was only possible before death and before the Judgment; the beautiful modern conception of a moral progress after death, the merciful mediæval conception of purgatory, were both unknown to him and to his contemporaries. Hence the gigantic importance of repentance while there was still time. It is another question whether he supposed that those excluded from the Kingdom would be annihilated, or kept in a constant condition for all time of painful conscious existence, whether material, or mental, or both. Was Jesus, like many of his contemporaries, able to reconcile—such is the amazing plasticity of the human mind—the dread doctrine of eternal punishment with a passionate belief in the infinite goodness of God? The great scholars are divided in their opinion. Prof. Bacon writes: "Jesus leaves the whole question of the fate of the

wicked absolutely open." Here the wish seems to me the father of the thought. Loisy more cautiously observes: "Perhaps the thought of Jesus on a subject, where no experience facilitates precision, was tolerably floating."[14] But though the eternity of painful punishment may be left a moot question so far as Jesus is concerned, and though we must remember that the time-perspectives of his age were not on our scale, so that in the Book of Enoch "aeonian," or everlasting, life is defined as a life which lasts for five hundred years, it seems difficult to hold either that Gehenna did not fill an important place in his thoughts and teaching, or that there is any real evidence to show that he believed that if you once got into Gehenna, there was any chance of your passing out of it into Heaven. On this gravely important matter it is no good attempting to minimize the chasm which separates his teaching from that of the modern universalist, or its inconsistency, as it would seem to such a universalist, with the dogma of the justice and the goodness of God. Nor can we deny that the fear of Gehenna as a motive was employed by him. "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." But the motive was not original to Jesus; therefore its consideration need no longer detain us.

More important is the question about the

relation of Jew to Gentile in the Judgment and the New World, though here, too, no certainty can be arrived at. But of one point there is no doubt. Jesus, as the successor of the prophets, was emphatic that race was no protection for sin. The Jew, as such, from the mere fact of his descent, would have no claim or right to admission to the Kingdom. The test for admission was a certain temper of mind, a humble faith, a righteous life—but not genealogy or blood. Jesus would have re-echoed and approved those amazing words of Amos: "*You* only have I known of all the inhabitants of the earth: *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities." There would be plenty of Israelite sinners among those excluded from the Kingdom of God.

But if the test of admission is character, is the Kingdom universal? Would there be no longer any barriers of race in the new order, and were Jew and Gentile to stand on an equal footing before God? The inference, to us obvious, must not be hastily drawn. The evidence is conflicting. Jesus did not preach a consciously universalist Kingdom, just as he did not conceive himself sent, or send his disciples, to the Gentiles and the heathen. Not Jesus, but Paul, gave to the problem a conscious and universalist solution. Yet there is good reason to believe that, like

the prophets before him, Jesus thought that the place of many excluded Jewish sinners in the new Kingdom would be filled by many Gentile believers. Gentiles from north and east and west and south would sit down, on equal terms, and in full citizenship, with the true descendants of Abraham at the heavenly banquet.

And in another point Jesus appears to transcend, or perhaps one should rather say to ignore, the customary Jewish particularism or nationalism. So far as we can gather from the fragmentary, and, we must also admit, prejudiced and interested records, he did not conceive the Kingdom as a sort of righteous Jewish Empire. The domination of the Romans would indeed be broken, the rule of the heathen Emperor would come to an end, but there is no trace in the records that the rule of another Emperor—only this time of Jewish descent—would be substituted, who would reign like David over a large and prosperous Palestine, with a great fringe of vassal and tributary states. The political aspect of the Kingdom seems of no interest to Jesus : it fades completely away, and has no place in his more spiritual hopes and anticipations. The Kingdom is not merely individualist ; it is a society, a community ; I think, we may even add, there is a King ; but the governmental or ruling aspect of the

society is entirely ignored. There is no triumph of Jew over Gentile, of the oppressed over the oppressor. We may, indeed, say that there are no differences of political status in Jesus's Kingdom : you are either wholly in it or wholly excluded. There is no ruling caste, no vassals or tributaries ; and within the Kingdom, if there are differences of worth and of degree, these are dominated and controlled by the loftier and guiding principle that higher greatness in rank is to be allotted and recognised for higher greatness in service.

Two other points we must notice about Jesus's conception of the Kingdom, which are of great interest for us to-day. The prophet Ezekiel had urged those who listened to him to make and get them a new heart and a new spirit. But almost in the same breath he had promised that God, of His own grace, and in the accomplishment of His holy purpose, would give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them. What is now demanded as a voluntary effort of man is now promised as a voluntary gift of God. Just in the same way, Jesus urges his disciples and those who listen to his preaching to strive to gain the Kingdom with every effort of mind and will, and he also represents it, without any inconsistency, or at least without any sense of inconsistency, as the gracious gift of God. Though the dualism of the Fourth Gospel is foreign to the

Synoptics and still more to the historic Jesus, though the world is not divided into men of darkness and men of light, there are nevertheless unsystematic anticipations of this hard and fast division. In the good pleasure of God the Kingdom shall be the glorious destiny and heritage of a certain number of persons; but no one can know precisely—such we may suppose to be the thought of Jesus—whether he will himself form one of that number, and in any case he must never cease to do his best to qualify for admission. When all is done that man can do, the beatitude of the Kingdom is far greater than his deserts. In a double sense the Kingdom is a gift. First, because man can never deserve it; and, secondly, because it is God who helps him to attain it.

The demands which Jesus made upon his disciples, or would-be disciples, relative to the acquisition of the Kingdom varied apparently to some extent, as was only natural, in different stages of his career. They tended to increase as the *dénouement* grew nearer and the tension became more strained. Perhaps also they varied with his mood, and with the particular person to whom he was speaking.

We are not surely to imagine that he usually believed that the ordinary average citizen who kept the commandments, and was humble, chaste, just and kind, up to a very decent standard, would be excluded

from the beatitudes of the Kingdom. On some occasions the special beauty of trust, of the sense of dependence upon God and of that quality which the Germans call *Anspruchslosigkeit*, came over him very strongly; perhaps also the objectionableness of their opposites. It was on such occasions, and in such moods, perchance, that he would say that unless men and women were like little children—in disposition of mind and soul—they would not be allowed to receive the Kingdom of God. On other occasions —perhaps at a distinct period of his career— he seems to have demanded for every seeker and candidate for the Kingdom a full and complete renouncement of earthly possessions and earthly ties. To obtain this highest conceivable prize and gift it is necessary, as it were, to make a clean sweep of everything which could deflect your mind, your heart, and your actions, from being bent exclusively upon the glorious goal. "All for all" must be the watchword.

And here we seem to perceive a certain new individualism in Jesus, which needs our attention. It is, I believe, often said that the doctrine or injunction, "Die to live," is of the very essence of Christianity. In its earliest use and meaning this injunction had a definitely eschatological application. Whoever would save his life must be prepared to

lose it, and he that has so lost it shall find it. Jesus, when he uttered these sayings and others like them, was primarily thinking of the life before the Kingdom and the life within it—or, as we should say, of the life upon earth and the life beyond the grave.

To be received into *that* life—with its beatitudes and its nearness to God—is worth any sacrifice in this life, or rather it is worth the sacrifice of this life altogether. What can it profit a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his life—his life, that is, in the true and permanent sense, his eternal life within the Kingdom?

Given the assumptions of Jesus, his argument seems strictly sound. But some have thought and think that the doctrine, while it gave rise to all kinds of heroism and greatness, has also been the ultimate origin of much dubious morality and of some positive evil. We often observe of doctrines and principles that they can be exaggerated towards evil, and that they have the defects of their qualities. Jewish critics often bring complaints about New Testament teaching in this connection. First, they say it has engendered a false other-worldliness. Secondly, it has engendered a certain individualistic selfishness. It has induced the temper of mind and the belief which made, for instance, Tertullian say—I quote from Seeck's remark-

able, if strongly biassed, chapter on Christianity in his striking *History of the Fall of the Ancient World*—"I am my own end. I care for nothing except to have no care. One can find a much better life in solitude than in society. Do you blame me as lazy? Do you say one must live for one's city, for the empire, for society? These views prevailed formerly. But no one was born for others, seeing that every one has to die for himself." Such sentiments, say the Jewish critics, with all that has followed them, are the direct result of the teaching of Jesus. There is undoubtedly, I think, some element of truth in these criticisms; nevertheless they, in their turn, have produced harmful exaggerations. For modern Jews have sometimes tended to underestimate the place of otherworldliness or of individualism in their own religion, just because they have deprecated its supposed exaggeration in the religion of their neighbours. To speak of this would, however, lead me too far afield. As to the criticism itself, I think it hardly applies to Jesus and to his own utterances. For we have to remember that to Jesus there was no question of a long continuance of ordinary earthly conditions for endless ages. There was to be a great catastrophe: the end of one order, the beginning of another and a final order. It was soon no longer to be a question of

*obtaining* the other life, the world to come: the other life would be there; it was already at the door; and in that other life there would be no progress and no change. The good, on the one side, in the Kingdom, enjoying its beatitudes: the evil, on the other side, excluded for ever. No more chances whether for evil or for good. The lot of every man would be soon determined once and for all. Much of the moral teaching of the gospel is relative to that one overmastering idea, even when the idea itself is not definitely expressed. Hence Jesus could not say: Do not neglect your earthly duties in your zeal to obtain the Kingdom, or do not forget the generations to come after you upon earth in your eagerness to receive the heavenly guerdon. Nor need we, I think, make the perhaps somewhat captious criticism that a healthy person is not always, and should not be always, thinking about his own salvation; that salvation, like happiness, is probably best found when least thought of; that a man should do his duty to his family, his city, and his country, and leave God to look after his destiny in the world to come; or that the best preparation for another life is to think as little about it as possible, but rather to do the utmost good in this life, and leave your tiny corner of earth a little better than you found it.

It still remains true that the idea of the one essential thing in life, the one ultimate good, for which all else must be sacrificed and to which all else must give way, is a necessary feature of every lofty and stirring morality. Here, as in other points, we notice, and in noticing appreciate, the heroic element in the teaching of Jesus ; and we shall, I think, conclude that to keep even ordinary life sweet and clean, to prevent every-day morality becoming commonplace, and commonplace morality degenerating into Philistinism, we need, besides and beyond the more equable, balanced, and sensible type of religious teaching, that provocative, paradoxical, and heroic type which is characteristic of the Gospels and of Jesus.

Moreover, it must never be forgotten that the repeated and eager injunction to obtain the true and eternal life by sacrificing the temporary and false life does not mean a sacrifice, so to speak, *in vacuo*. If it can be represented as a sacrifice of self for self, it can also be represented as a sacrifice of self for the sake of the cause. "For my sake and the Gospel's," says Jesus. The exact words need not be pressed, but the idea is surely genuine.[15] Jesus does not conceive of every individual as existing in a sort of isolated, water-tight compartment, and then hermit-like, despoiling himself of his possessions and

thus acquiring eternal life. The sacrifice is made indeed in one's own interest, but it is also, we might even say it is still more, made for the sake of the community. It is in *service*, voluntary and humble service for the community, for the little ones, in the seeking out and bringing in the strayed sheep, and in helping *them* too to enter the Kingdom, that one's own chance of entering it is most efficiently and properly secured. Though, in some passages in the Synoptics, Jesus seems to speak of the few who find the gate and of the many that miss it with strange and even painful equanimity, in other places he is reported as showing an ardent desire that as many should be saved as he and his disciples could possibly bring in. And to save others is the best way of saving oneself. Jesus himself was to be imitated, and he declares that he came to serve, to serve those little ones of whom it was not the will of the heavenly Father that one of them should perish.

It was, then, upon the basis, with the incentive, and from the background, of his doctrine of the Kingdom, that Jesus developed his general teaching about God and man and the relations of one to the other. Because a great something was going to happen, therefore Jesus, like the prophets of old, himself in his own eyes a prophet even as they, opens his mouth and speaks the words of warning

and of enlightenment. As M. Loisy has rightly said, he did not come as the founder of a new religion, hardly even as the conscious and deliberate reformer of the existing and traditional religion. He came to accomplish the great hope, or rather, perhaps, to play his own predestined part in its accomplishment.[16]

It is even doubtful whether, except perhaps in cases or moments of stress and conflict, he sought or desired or intended to put his own teaching in direct contrast with, or substitution for, the teaching of those around him, or the teaching of the Law. I have already spoken of his conflict with the letter of the Law in certain individual cases. The Sermon on the Mount makes him take up a theoretic attitude towards the Law as a whole, and that too—here most clearly unhistorically—at an early period in his career. Jesus is reported to have said that he has not come to *destroy* the Law or the Prophets, but (as most commentators render) to *fulfil* them. Into the meaning of this famous phrase, about which so much ink has been expended, I will not now enter. It would take too long. Its authenticity is not above dispute; its meaning, if it be authentic, somewhat doubtful. More clear, and in some ways more important, are the definite and even vehement contrasts between old and new, the Law and himself, as expressed in the six times repeated

antithesis, "Ye have heard that it was said, but I say unto you." It may be noted that there is no exact parallel to the phrase outside Matthew or even outside the Sermon on the Mount. Its meaning is not made more certain because, in one of the six cases, Jesus is made to quote as an injunction of the Law a statement which is not to be found there. I of course refer to the point, to which Jewish critics have called attention again and again, that Jesus is reported to have stated, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." Now it does say in the Pentateuch, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It does say in the Pentateuch, "Thou shalt love the stranger as the homeborn," but it nowhere says, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy." On the contrary, it says, "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart." It scarcely seems likely that Jesus would have been guilty of so grave an inaccuracy, or of one about which he could so easily have been contradicted. The phrase is also made the more startling because, three times out of the six, Jesus is alluding to laws contained in the Decalogue. And, generally, while the personal note, the sense of personal importance and personal authority, of which we have yet

to speak, was an undoubted characteristic of Jesus — and a characteristic, moreover, in which he differs from his prophetic predecessors, Amos, Isaiah, or Ezekiel—yet this especial emphasis of "I say" as contrasted with what the Law says — the Law which Jesus too held to be divine—seems somewhat doubtful and difficult. At least worth mentioning is the hypothesis of one of the greatest Rabbinic scholars now living, Dr. Schechter, that the phrase is a Greek equivalent of a Hebrew idiom, which would mean "You might understand such and such a law to mean, or to mean only, so and so; therefore I desire to point out to you that it means also so and so." [17] However this may be, we cannot safely use the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount as a convincing argument to prove that Jesus desired to put forward his own teaching in habitual contrast with, and in direct substitution for, the teaching of the Law.

On the other hand, it would, I think, be going too far to say that Jesus did not feel, or was not conscious, that he had any new doctrines, or new applications of old doctrines, to lay before his people. At any rate, as even Dr. Schechter's interpretation of the famous, "I say unto you," would imply, he did feel that there were implications of old doctrines which he desired to unfold and to

insist upon. And the relation of such new implications to his own person—the new note of authority in his teaching as a whole—must also be borne in mind. It is to these matters that I shall call your attention in the two following lectures.

## IV

# THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS RELATION TO MAN

I SPOKE in the last lecture concerning the conception which Jesus had formed about the Kingdom of God, and I pointed out how this conception constituted the setting or framework for much of his religious and ethical teaching, although nevertheless much of that teaching is still applicable and valuable for those to whom the conception of the Kingdom, as Jesus held it, has become distant and unreal. I then went on to say a few words about the individualistic element in the teaching of Jesus, and about the relation of his teaching as a whole, in his own mind, to the teaching of the Law. Here would be the point at which I ought to consider the entire religious and ethical teaching of Jesus in all its bearings and branches, both where it is old and where it is new. I have, however, already indicated that so large and comprehensive a

task is beyond the scope of the present short course of lectures, as it is also beyond the power of the present lecturer.

I only propose in the present lecture to deal, rather unsystematically, with one or two important features and elements in the religious and ethical teaching of Jesus, as we may gather them from the Synoptics.

But before I enter upon this much more limited, yet sufficiently arduous task, may I start the subject by two or three general remarks upon the originality of the teaching of Jesus as a whole? I am inclined to believe that both Jews and Christians have sometimes been a little unfair as regards this question, the former in unduly depreciating the originality of Jesus, the latter in unduly exalting it. As against Jewish critics it is only right to remember that most of the parallels which the industry of scholars has culled from the Rabbinical literature were undoubtedly spoken, as well as written down, after Jesus and not before him. Priority is therefore his. But a far more important point is that the teaching of Jesus must be regarded as a whole, both in what he says and in what he does not say. Its originality is not only to be found in its separate sentences and teachings, but in its general character, its spirit, its atmosphere. Some would add that its originality is in that very note of authority, of which we have to

speak by and by, in the fact that Jesus follows, as has been said, "the impulsion of his own nature and of the spirit which is in him," and that he "opposes the voice of his own conscience to the tradition of the Scribes." [18] Such a judgment does, I think, convey something which answers not only to the first impression which the documents that contain the records of his teaching make upon the reader, but which also answers to the facts when thoroughly questioned and investigated. In any case the teaching of Jesus is more than its *disjecta membra*: it is a whole; it is a spirit. To this spirit it is easy to do less than justice through cold analysis and dissection. An atomistic treatment of the Gospel, as indeed of their own Rabbinical literature, is a not unfrequent error of Jewish critics.

On the other hand, just as the teaching of Jesus must be taken as a whole, and as its spirit must be brought into account as well as its letter, so must it be with the Talmudic and Rabbinical literature. If there is to be comparison—we know comparisons are usually odious—then the spirit of the one must be compared with the spirit of the other. Still more must that be the case if the Jewish religion as a whole is compared and contrasted with the religion of Jesus or the religion of the Synoptics. Then you must, to some extent, trust the person who has been brought

up in, and is still a member of, the Jewish religion. To some extent you must trust his instinct. He may not be able to produce chapter and verse when he tells you that that bit of teaching or that particular conception seems familiar to him and obvious, while that other bit of teaching or that other conception seems strange, or new, or original. Yet I am inclined to think that, to some extent at least, you must trust his instinct. At all events it is, I fear, that instinct, rather than any adequate knowledge, that I shall make use of, and ask you to bear with, in the present lecture. Its results will, perhaps, contradict general verdicts upon some important points, but in others it may confirm them.

I will begin with what one great theologian has of recent years pressed upon our attention as the central and most important feature of the teaching of Jesus, namely, his conception of God.[19]

In itself that conception seems to me extremely simple. We may, I should imagine, be fairly sure that Jesus never pondered over the nature of God except as regards God's relation to man. What God is in Himself would be a problem which never crossed his mind, or which to him, at any rate, was not a problem at all.

Jesus was a man of the intensest, but also the simplest, religious faith. He was not a

philosopher. He was not a philosopher even in that untechnical sense of the word in which we might predicate it of the author of the 139th Psalm. The theoretic conception of God to which the author of that Psalm is straining is much more philosophic, I take it, than anything which we meet with in the genuine words of Jesus. The Psalmist meditates upon God's wonderful omnipresence, and upon His nearness to every worshipper. God's nearness was felt by Jesus directly with a vivid intensity unsurpassed by any man, but I doubt whether the divine omnipresence in any theoretic sense ever presented itself to his mind.

It is the custom nowadays to pour a good deal of contempt upon the conception of a mere outside God. The supposed transcendental, outside, distant God of Judaism comes in sometimes for a fair amount of attention and of scorn. Now it may well be that an outside God is not a philosophic or true conception, or that for us to-day, or for those persons who despise the idea, an outside God would mean a distant God. But because an outside God is unphilosophic, or because for us He would be meaningless or distant, that is no reason whatever why to other people now living, and still less why to other people in the past, an outside God should not be, or have been, intensely near. Nothing is

more certain, on the one hand, than that to Jesus God was vividly near—near, as the Talmud says of God with all kinds of nearness—but, on the other hand, nothing seems, to me at least, more certain than that the God of Jesus, like the God of Isaiah, was an outside God. To the author of the 139th Psalm the expression, "Our Father who art in Heaven," was probably a metaphor, a figure of speech, just as it is to you and to me; I very much doubt whether it was wholly a figure of speech to Jesus. To him at any rate God was a distinct separate person, whose holy spirit doubtless might be communicated to man, but who Himself was no part of man, just as man was no part of Him. I lay stress upon this simple transcendence and outsideness of the God of Jesus, because, if I am right, it proves by a signal instance how such a simple conception can be easily combined with a most intense conviction of the Divine nearness. For my part I believe that it has been so combined by millions of simple believers in the past, and I have a very shrewd suspicion that, in spite of Goethe and the popular oratory of the moment, it is still so combined by thousands of simple believers to-day.

Upon the theoretic side, then, of the conception of God there seems to me nothing novel or original in the teaching of Jesus.

It seems to me familiar, Jewish, and nothing more. The Rabbis tell me also that God is a person, that He is outside me, but that He is intensely near. In that fundamental respect I find, and am sensible of, no change whatever. I was brought up upon such teaching. It is quite Jewish and orthodox.

Then we come to God's relations with man. Is there novelty here? You will think at once of that description or name of God which Jesus delighted to use and to dwell upon, "Our Father who art in Heaven." God as a Father, man as His child. Have we not here something central, characteristic, and new? Let me premise at once that there is much sensitiveness upon this question both among Jews and Christians. And if there is sensitiveness, there is prejudice. Hence, what I have to say you must regard with just suspicion, but if, for the reasons given, you are to suspect what is said to you by me, the pygmy, I make bold to assert that there is no less reason to suspect what is said to you by Harnack, the giant. On the score of prejudice, it is probably six of one and half a dozen of the other.

I do not read or hear so much to-day as I used to hear and read twenty and thirty years ago of the antitheses that Judaism taught a God of justice, and Christianity teaches a God of love, or that the Law was

sternly severe, while the Gospel is gently pitying. In view of the "narrow gate," the "offspring of vipers," the "gnashing of teeth," the "sheep and the goats," and many other Gospel conceptions, upon the one hand, in view of the numerous passages about God's pity and loving-kindness and forgiveness in the Old Testament, upon the other hand, these old antitheses have been tacitly dropped. But, in the place of them, another has become somewhat common. To the Jews, God is a King; to Jesus and his disciples, God is a Father. To the Jews, men are God's subjects and slaves; to Jesus and his disciples, they are His children and sons.

There can be no doubt that Jesus habitually thought of God as his Father and the Father of other men, but I do not think that he would therefore have rejected, or refused to make use of the metaphor of ruler and subject. There is no doubt that Jewish Rabbis, from the days of Jesus to our own time, habitually spoke of God as their King, but they did not on that account ignore, on the contrary they constantly made use of the metaphor, of father and son. They often combined the two, and to this day "Our Father and King" remains for all Jews a most familiar invocation of God.

It is sometimes said that if the Rabbis and the Jews did occasionally call God their

father, he was only regarded as the father of the race, and not as the father of every individual Jew, and still less as the father of all mankind, whereas to Jesus it was not in virtue of his *blood* that God was his father, it was in virtue of his *humanity*. My reply is as follows. That by the Rabbis God was not felt as the father of every individual Jew is undoubtedly false; but that his fatherhood was largely limited to Israel is true. Only it must not be supposed that therefore the fatherhood was not truly and purely felt, within the limitation, among those and by those to whom it applied. The inconsistency was not felt; it was ignored. Even to us today, with all our philosophy, it is not always easy to draw the practical application of the dogma that God is the equal father of the black man and the white. To Jesus, on the other hand, it is true that God was his father, and the father of those to whom he spoke and among whom he lived, in virtue of a common *humanity*. The element of race and nationality seemed to fade away. When the contrast was not directly presented to him, as when he journeyed outside Galilee in the north, he did not think of his auditors and of himself as Israelites, but just simply, and more universally, as men. Hence, though he made and drew no theoretic deductions about all men being the children of God, it was easy

for those who came after him to do so. The elements for such universalism lay in his teaching, and in his habitual manner of speech and thought, all ready to their hand. Yet there lay ready to their hand another element also. For some men were not children of God, but children of the devil, and if Jesus did not think so, his immediate disciples or editors certainly did.

Such seems to me the truth about this vexed question. Jesus felt and realised God to be his father, himself to be His son, with vivid intensity. And if God was the father of Jesus, so was He, so did He desire Himself to be felt, the father of other men. He was the father of the unjust and the sinner, as He was the father of the righteous and the just; and though Jesus did not always draw the full consequences of such a doctrine—or he would not have condemned his opponents to an eternal divine condemnation—he yet drew them so far as to urge (as we have seen) that those sinners (who were not *also* his opponents) should be loved and sought out and converted by man, even as their repentance was desired and rejoiced over by God.

What the Jewish reader feels in reading the Gospels is no new doctrine as regards the divine fatherhood, but an old familiar doctrine in (very frequently, not always) a high degree of purity, warmth, and concentration. It is

noticeable that the Sermon on the Mount does not dream of making up a seventh antithesis to the effect that, "ye have heard that it was said to the men of old time, God is your King, but I say unto you, God is your Father." Nor does Jesus hesitate in a parable, which bears many marks of authenticity, to bid his disciples say, "We are slaves. We have merely done that which it was our duty to do." [20]

The fatherhood of God implies, then, to Jesus that God cares for man, and is always near him, even as a father cares for and is near his human children. It implies that man must trust God always, even as a little child will trust his father. It implies also that man must put his petitions and needs before God with perfect frankness, confidence, and freedom, but it also implies that God knows what is best for us even before we speak to Him. It implies that man must love God with his whole heart, ever conscious that that love is also returned. It has its implications for us in our sinfulness, as it has its implications when we do right. For the erring child is still a child, both to its human and to the divine father. God desires the return of the prodigal; He welcomes and draws him back to his true home. All this is thoroughly Jewish and Rabbinic, when Judaism and Rabbinism are not "at their

most unfamiliar," if I may so express myself, though certainly when they are "at their best."

But what are man's duties to God, and how does God act towards him in relation to his virtue and his sin? Here we approach a highly important, disputed and complicated question. Once more come in the Law and Legalism with their results.

It is said that the Law made the Jews think about the relation of God to man only and exclusively as the dispenser of reward and of punishment. For so many commandments observed, so much reward; for so many commandments violated, so much punishment. Or, again, from so much prosperity, you can infer so much goodness; from so much misery, you can infer so much sin. God dispenses to every one according to his work. For the tale of good bricks, so many pence of reward; for the tale of bad bricks, so many pence of punishment. Not what you *are*, but what you *do*, is what God looks to; not to the heart, but to the outward action. The motive is nothing; the deed is all. And the deeds, good and bad alike, are merely the deeds of the law. A rabbit eaten, so much sin; so many prayers and washings, so much virtue. The one principle of the divine action is measure for measure, or put more colloquially, tit for tat.

Now this is hardly a caricature of what many text-books say, but it is a caricature of what Rabbinic Judaism was and is. I cannot, however, prove my assertion. There is no time. And we have to do with Jesus and not with the Rabbis. Yet two things must be borne in mind before we pass on to him. First, that between the Old Testament and Jesus there lies the introduction of the belief in a future life of happiness or of misery. By the introduction of this doctrine, as Gunkel has so rightly said, a huge cleavage was made between what lies on one side of it and what lies on the other.[21] The proportions of all things were changed. No inference can, therefore, be made from the doctrine, say, of Deuteronomy about rewards and punishments to the doctrines of the Rabbis.

Secondly, although the position of the Rabbis and of Judaism as to this question as I stated it a moment ago was a caricature, this does not mean that there is no truth in it at all. A half-truth may be difficult to deal with, but it is not wholly false. There *was* a good deal of retribution doctrine, and of punishment and reward, and of measure for measure, in the Judaism of the age of Jesus. Undoubtedly it is one of the defects of legalism that it does *tend* to emphasise and exaggerate these conceptions. No practical Theism, I venture to think, can ever do

without them, and most assuredly they were not done without in the Theism of Jesus. But he did limit them, as we are now about to see.

It never entered the mind of Jesus that God would not reward the righteous and punish the wicked. As we have seen, the righteous and the repentant enter the Kingdom, while the wicked and the stubborn are excluded from it for ever. And we may rejoice to think that, in spite of a few germs of a more malignant doctrine, the excluded *were* the wicked, and not merely those who happened not to believe in a dogma, or who refused to allow that the Messiah had arrived upon the earth. We may rejoice to think that, upon the whole, it is for actual deeds of wickedness done, and not because they are predestined children of darkness and unbelievers, that the wicked are despatched to Gehenna. There is something far worse than the strictest measure for measure, and that is predestination or reprobation for belief and not for deed.

But though God punishes and rewards, his rewards are rather to be regarded as gifts than as guerdons. Man has no claim upon God. "Merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to thee." The Kingdom itself, as we have seen, is not so much a reward as a grace. Do what he

will, man never deserves it; do his duty as much as he may, man has no claim for special recognition and reward. The Kingdom, when it comes, will be far greater and more glorious than man can have merited. It is not the product of calculating justice and retribution; it is the outflow of God's free and exuberant love.

I do not think that these few statements go beyond what Jesus actually says in the Synoptic Gospels, and I am also inclined to think that, though they are not without their parallels in the Rabbinic literature, they nevertheless may correctly be regarded as comparatively new and original.

Again, the scene of real reward, so far as it can be called reward, is, as we should now say, in heaven and not upon earth, or according to the language and thought of Jesus, it is in the Kingdom, in the new era, in the life of the resurrection. Moreover there *can* be no more idea of reward or recompense in *this* life and *this* order, for this life and this order are soon to close.

The Rabbis also believed that the true reward of the righteous would be in the world to come, but—and here was one of the defects of their teaching—they still taught a far too close and crude correspondence between earthly well-being and desert. More especially did they hold that those who were

stricken by sudden calamity or strange disease, together with those who in popular belief were possessed by demons, had fallen under the displeasure of God, and were suffering because of some known or secret sin. In spite of the new doctrine of the resurrection and the life after death, the old errors of Job's friends had not yet been eradicated. It is not easy to say how far Jesus partially shared, and how far he would wholly have repudiated, these errors. Those who think he denied the doctrine that suffering betokened guilt rely greatly upon one single passage in Luke, which, however, may only mean that certain persons who had recently died in a terrible and startling way were, though sinners, yet not *more* sinful than others who, so far, had escaped. Still, even so interpreted, it may, and probably does, if only incidentally, set some limit to an exaggerated application of the doctrine of divine retribution.[22] And where Jesus says that God lets the sun shine upon the good and the bad, and is kind towards the unthankful and the evil, he does seem to mean that, so far as earth is concerned, and until the coming of the Judgment, God by no means deals with man on earth upon a strict scheme of proportionate retribution. He does not always reward the good, for on earth the good are often miserable; He does not always punish the

wicked, for on earth He is long-suffering and compassionate. Nevertheless, in view of the fate which is ultimately to befall the good, and the fate which, if he continue unrepentant, is ultimately to befall the wicked, the one may be congratulated upon his present wretchedness, the other may be commiserated for his present prosperity.

Again, if God proceeded upon principles of strict retribution, He should presumably give a greater reward to those who have always tried to do His will than to those who, by a tardy, if sincere, repentance, have sought to compensate for a long life of rebellion and iniquity. Yet Jesus insists that the reward of both shall be the same, and that God rejoices more over one sinner that repents than over ninety-and-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. But here it must be noticed that his teaching is Rabbinic, for wherever repentance is concerned, the Rabbis throw the dogma of proportionate retribution to the winds. For example, a story is told of a hardened and odious sinner who is suddenly moved to intense repentance; in the vehemence of his contrition he dies, and a heavenly voice is heard to say that he has entered the Kingdom of Heaven. A Rabbi hears and sighs, but he does not question God's justice; he only says, and the saying is frequently repeated in the vast Rabbinical

literature, "There are some who attain to the Kingdom in many years; there are others who achieve it in an hour." [23]

Perhaps the most striking of the frequent attacks in the Gospels upon a too mechanical application of the doctrine of retribution in the dealings of God with man, is the parable in Matthew of the Labourers in the Vineyard. Each labourer, unequal as his toil has been, receives the same reward. A good deal seems implied. From unequal opportunities God does not demand equal results; a little in man's eyes may be much in God's eyes. What God gives is His own; He gives it in full measure, not as a bargain or as a sale, but freely, and of His own grace and goodness. Outward inequality of service may nevertheless justify in God's eyes an equivalence of reward. All this seems contained in the parable, which is surely one of the most original, as it is one of the most suggestive, in the whole Synoptic series.

Of measure for measure as a principle, sometimes right and sometimes wrong, in the dealings of man with man, I will say a word or two in another connection. Here let me again observe that Jesus maintains his character as a prophet by the pure inwardness of his ethical and religious teaching. The prophetical religion could be summed up in this: the knowledge and worship of the one

true God, justice and compassion rather than sacrifices and outward ceremonial. Jesus had no longer to inveigh against idolatry. The one God was acknowledged on all hands, but there was still (as the defect of the legal system) some outwardness or formalism. Against this defect Jesus protested with all his might, and it was this protest which led him, as we have seen, into a conflict, rather incidental than intentional, with the letter of the Mosaic Law.

In his definitions of the true fast, the true prayer, and the true alms, as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proceeds upon genuine prophetic lines. So too, we may add (without entering into details), in his remarks about anger, about adultery, about oaths. Everywhere Jesus seems to penetrate the letter to find the spirit, and to look for principles and motives rather than for outward and isolated deeds. Goodness is not the fulfilment of so many separate commandments; sin is not the infraction of so many precepts. Jesus looks to the character as a whole. Where an exclusive regard for the mere outward letter would coarsen and cheapen, Jesus, looking within, and filled with the spirit, broadens and clarifies. His righteousness is not only deeper than ordinary, outside, customary morality, but it is also sweeter, more gracious, and more pure. It

has a more choice and elusive aroma, just as also, to use another metaphor, it is cast in a sterner and more heroic mould. Yet if it be asked, "Is it not then, if it be all this, original and new, as compared with the religious and moral teaching of the Rabbis?" the answer is by no means easy. Its inwardness, at any rate, fine as it is, does not strike me as off the line, or as very unfamiliar. It seems to me like the Rabbis at their best, for they too, in one sense, though passionate adherents of the Law, are yet able, where necessary, to rise above the letter of the Law, and to preach, upon occasion, a noble spirituality. The teaching of Jesus in this respect seems to me strong, concentrated, prophetic, but yet not anti-Rabbinic where Rabbinism is at its best, and still less, anti-Jewish. For my own part, I believe that we can find room and place for them all—for the Law and for the Prophets, for Jesus and for the Rabbis. They supplement and complement, sometimes even they correct, one another.

Just now I used the word "heroic" in relation to the teaching of Jesus. That heroic element seems to show itself in a certain grand largeness of view and in a certain grand simplicity. Taken as a whole, this heroic element is full of genius and inspiration. We must not always take it literally, and squeeze out of it too literal an application. The *letter*

of even this prophet's teaching may kill; here too we must sometimes look only to the *spirit.*

Take, in illustration, first of all, his doctrine of faith. How large and simple and fresh it is, how child-like, how buoyant, how profound. It is quite untechnical; it is not opposed to works; we might almost as well call it trust instead of faith — unbounded trust in the constant goodness of God. It is not hampered by any conflict with laws of nature; yet it is complete in itself and needs no outward signs. As Jesus possesses this trust himself, as it is ready to his call, and rarely or never (I omit the question of his death) plays him false, so he demands it from others. As he asks and needs from God no sign, so he reprimands those who demand it from him, God's messenger. It was not wonderful, filled as he was with the conviction that he was sent by God upon a divine mission, that his demand from others for faith in his divine Father should run over into a demand for faith in himself. The greater to him included the less. His opponents were not unjustified in distinguishing carefully between God and the Teacher. And hence once more arose the inevitable conflict.

Again we notice the heroic element in the paradoxes of the Sermon on the Mount.

Rejoice when you are persecuted; be glad when you are miserable. Or again, in the rebuttal of the *lex talionis*, and in the demand for perfection; love your enemies, do good to them that injure you; at all hazards and at all costs, no rejoinder of evil, no retaliation in wrong-doing; no anger in heart, and no angry deed, because of another's sin, even though you are the sufferer and the wronged; no measure for measure in evil, though more than measure for measure in good. Of course such principles cannot be literally applied; in the hard facts of the world's everyday life they need, as it were, correction and adaptation. They are not, and never could be, the laws of a state; but, nevertheless, they remain the principles of a hero, which heroes every now and then can put in practice, and which, as ideals and as spirit, are still fresh and valid and true.

Once more, we notice the heroic element in the unconditional demand for self-sacrifice —self-sacrifice for others, self-sacrifice for oneself. "All for all," as we have already seen. The renouncement and abandonment of the earthly for the heavenly, of Now for Then, of this world for the next. The soul must be quite simple, filled, as the true hero's soul is filled, with one overmastering purpose, with one constant and steady desire. If there

comes a temptation athwart that purpose, it must relentlessly be suppressed. If hand and eye might prove a stumbling-block, away with them. Count the cost, but the quest once begun, no hesitation, no drawing back, no bargaining in means. All for all.

There seems some reason to believe that Jesus, like many of the Prophets, had a certain antipathy to wealth. His sympathy for the poor flowed over into a certain antagonism to the rich. In his character there was no gloom; on the contrary, it was, so far as we can gather, naturally cheerful and serene, ready and willing to enjoy the simple gifts of nature and of God. Nevertheless, the ascetic touch, which is discernible in the Gospel of Luke, does not seem to be unhistoric. At some point, or during some stage, in his career, Jesus does seem to have demanded from those who would be his followers and disciples, perhaps even from those who desired to make themselves sure of a place in the coming Kingdom, a complete renouncement of all earthly goods, as also a complete abandonment of all earthly ties. They who would follow him must lose all to gain all; perhaps even to find life eternal they must be ready to endure the martyr's doom. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." Who can measure the effect of these striking words? Self-denial was not unknown before

Jesus spoke. Yet this clear enunciation of the principle, this vivid conception of the ideal, were surely new and original contributions to the history of religion and morality. Upon their applications and developments it is unnecessary to dwell.

Here it is where Jesus, though not by any means un-Jewish, yet seems to strike a new, a hitherto unheard-of, note. And one does seem to find in certain aspects of Christian self-sacrifice, though not always wisely applied, original manifestations of high moral capacity, which go back to, and proceed from, the trumpet-call of the founder of the Christian faith. Active renunciation, full self-sacrifice for the sake of the Master, and in the cause of truth, of succour, of compassion. This sort of heroic well-doing and heroic self-sacrifice does seem to me characteristic of some Christian morality, even as the injunction and the ideal from which it springs were originally due to the teacher of Nazareth.

In one respect, however, the ideal of renouncement laid down by Jesus does seem un-Jewish and not merely original. I cannot imagine that any Rabbi would have actually condemned the doctrine so far as I have at present spoken of it, even though, for example, he might have suggested that the right use of money was better than a complete abandonment of it, with any other similar qualification.

But one feature of the doctrine he would undoubtedly have viewed with grave mistrust. I mean the attitude of Jesus towards the family and its ties. Each instance as it comes can be explained away, but the effect of all the instances taken together goes markedly against the Jewish grain. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." "Leave the dead to bury their own dead." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple." "There be eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake." The effect of all these sentences is to some extent cumulative. It is true that in the old blessing of Moses, Levi is praised because he "said of his father, and of his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew he his own children." But these words had little effect upon Jewish morality. The words of Jesus, though perhaps not meant to be charged with greater meaning, have had momentous issues for evil as well as for good. Perhaps, then, by their fruits one must judge them.

With this one very important exception, the great doctrine of renunciation remains

pure and high; and though it is an impracticable ideal for most of us, are not impracticable ideals still necessary even for commonplace lives?

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"

## V

# THE VIEWS OF JESUS RESPECTING HIMSELF AND HIS MISSION

I HAVE not attempted in the previous lectures to estimate the value of the religious teaching of Jesus as a whole, or to compare it with that of the Old Testament or of Rabbinism. Such a general estimate would be too ambitious a venture. It will probably be found that the originality and the greatness of the teaching do not depend so much upon the details of the particular things said as upon the manner in which they are said, and still more upon their effect as a whole. To each individual striking utterance of Jesus it is likely enough that a good parallel can be found in the Rabbinic literature, but when Jewish scholars adopt this method of disproving the originality of the Gospel, they forget (quite apart from questions of date) the size of the Talmud and the Midrashim. The teaching of Jesus is contained in three little books, which do

not fill more than sixty-eight double column pages of tolerably small print. The teaching belongs, or is attributed, to one man, and constitutes, in large measure, a consistent and harmonious whole. It is not a combination of a thousand different occasional and disconnected sayings of a hundred different Rabbis. Again, as a famous German scholar rather bitingly said, the greatness of the Synoptics, as compared with the greatness of the Talmud, must be measured by what is not there as well as by what is.[24] We have not to neglect a vast quantity of third- and fourth-rate material, and seek for occasional pearls amid a mass of negligible trivialities. And, lastly, we must take into consideration, as I started by observing, not only what Jesus said, but how he said it. The beauty, the distinction, in a word, the genius of the form, must surely be taken into account as well as the excellence of the matter.

At the same time we must not be led away by the genius of the form too far, and be guilty of unfairness upon the other side. In many points of his teaching Jesus simply sums up what, from the later Rabbinic literature, we may safely assume to have been the best current doctrine among the Rabbis either of his own day or of the next half-dozen generations. It is not necessary for me to prove this in detail, nor do such proofs carry conviction

to those who are outside. You have either to know the Rabbinical literature very thoroughly, or to have a certain instinct—an instinct which is naturally only possessed by those who are within. One must know when to accept parallels and when not to be deceived by them. One may, however, state in brief general terms that the teaching of Jesus about, let me say, repentance, or charity, or humility, or lust, and about several other moral and religious subjects, is quite in accordance with, and does not go beyond the limits of, the *best* doctrine of the Rabbis.

Even when we have to deal with so famous and characteristic an element of the teaching as the love of enemies, we must be careful to hold the scales with judicial impartiality. Jewish critics usually take the line that in the command, "Love your enemies," there is indeed an original feature, but that the feature, though it sounds well, is impracticable and therefore undesirable or harmful. Jewish ethics, they will tell you, say, "*Help*, and do good to, your enemy whenever occasion offers." This can be done, and therefore is done. Christian ethics say, "*Love* your enemy." This cannot be done, and is therefore always neglected, as, for instance, the history of the Jews for eighteen hundred years has so conspicuously proved.

It would take a long while to go into

this criticism fully and fairly, as regards what it asserts both of Jewish teaching on the one hand, and of Christian teaching upon the other. We should have also to estimate the value of the Greek verb which we translate "love" in this particular connection, and decide how far there is a precise equivalence between the two. For all this there is no time. It would perhaps be found that the teaching of Jesus is here too on the lines of a few highest Rabbinic utterances, but that it goes beyond them in a sort of intense inwardness, in emotional fervour, and in the eager passion of genius. Here too the stress would perhaps have to be laid, to some extent at least, upon the way in which the teaching is expressed, as well as upon its actual subject-matter.

The mention of this stress leads on naturally to what we have now to speak of. For when we talk of the way in which the teaching was expressed, we come near to the personality of the speaker. "And they were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." I will not stop to discuss the precise meaning of the word "authority" in this familiar passage. But at least it means that in the teaching of Jesus there seemed nothing between him and God. He did not quote, or depend upon, his predecessors; he did not say, "My teacher

was wont to say this or that." He occasionally used, but did not base his words upon, either the Law or the Prophets; he just depended upon the inspiration of the moment. He spoke the message, he gave voice to the teaching, which the holy spirit of God had placed in his mouth. It is this authoritative character of his teaching which partly explains the impression which it makes upon us, as well as the impression which it made upon his auditors. Its touch of personal authority is an element in its originality.

So far I have said nothing about Jesus himself, of his character, his personal claims, intentions, and objects. Something has been said of his teaching, but nothing of his life. Obviously this is a great omission. The Synoptic Gospels tell not only of the teaching, but also of the ministry, and to that extent of the life. Indeed, to Mark, the oldest of the Gospels, the life, if that life be taken to include the death and the resurrection, is more important than the teaching. And would not this judgment of Mark be adopted by many Christians even to-day? Do we not often hear that the teaching, great as it is, is shorn of its most especial feature and excellence, if looked at in an abstract sort of way, apart from the life? The life in the teaching, and the teaching in the life: we are, at any rate, only to separate them for purposes of

convenience. They form a whole, and the true greatness, or the true reality, consists of the whole, and not of parts which never existed by themselves, and were, in fact, in conscious relation to each other.

However much there may be of exaggeration in these assertions—and into this I shall not inquire—there is also, it can hardly be denied, a certain measure of truth.

Herein we may at once observe that Jesus differs from, or, as some would say, goes beyond the prophets: "More than a prophet is here." Of very few of the prophets—Jeremiah is a conspicuous exception—can we even speak of their characters. We know nothing about them one way or the other. We have their words, mingled with additions by their editors (as with Jesus), and nothing more. In any case they make no personal claim, except the big claim that they are the messengers or spokesmen of God. There is no question with them of forming a community within the community, of raising a special band of disciples, united by special ties of relationship to one head, of obtaining through miracles and other means a personal influence over a number of followers and admirers. To this rule Isaiah is hardly an exception. None of them ask for renunciation or sacrifice "for my sake." The personal note, the personal touch, are wanting. But

all these things are predicated of Jesus, and some of them, or all of them, may be historic. Not long ago I received a letter from one of the greatest Jewish scholars of Germany, in which he differentiates, to the disadvantage of Jesus, between him and the prophets on this very ground that the prophets are so grandly impersonal; they think and speak of God and Israel and never of themselves.

It is obvious that I shall be unable to enter properly upon the difficult problems which are thus opened up to our view. Even the character of Jesus I must refrain from speaking of. That character is a sort of sanctuary to every Christian, whether Trinitarian or Unitarian, and even to thousands of persons who are now neither the one nor the other, but who were reared in Christian homes. It ill becomes one who stands outside to speak, except with great hesitation and reserve, about the sanctuary of others. If a Christian were addressing an audience of orthodox Jews about the Law, he would, I hope, be actuated by similar feelings, and be sensible of similar restraints. For their beloved Law occupies to orthodox Jews something of the same position as Jesus Christ occupies to Christians, and though I myself stand in different ways outside both sanctuaries, I have lived so much among those who are within both that I can appreciate their feelings.

But in addition to this difficulty there is another, due, as I think, to the subject itself and in no wise to the audience. How little we know of the life of Jesus, and how meagre and unsatisfactory is the material upon which we have to rely in order to estimate his character. Perhaps those inside the Christian sanctuary hardly realise often enough that, as Jowett has said, "An ideal necessarily mingles with all conceptions of Christ," or, again, that it is, "an ideal which we have to place before us intimately connected with practical life—nothing, if not a life—which may be conveniently spoken of as the life of Christ." [25]

What we know of the life of the historic Jesus is contained in Mark. And how little that is, and how often dubious, or even legendary. It is set in a hazy background of miracle and eulogy. The biographer is no impartial historian. He is a devotee, a worshipper, intent upon proving his theses that Jesus was the Messiah, and the Son of God. The light falls strongly upon the hero; shadows fall upon his opponents and upon those only. Of the short life of Jesus we are told a few events which belong to the last eighteen months of his earthly career. Of what went before them we know nothing.

Yet even with all these qualifications we seem to see, through the mists of eulogy and legend, the sure outlines of a noble person-

ality. Here we have a deeply religious nature, filled, as perhaps few before or after have been filled, with the love of God and the consciousness of His presence. A character naturally serene and sunny, but with the most vivid appreciation of, and pity for, the wretched, the unfortunate, the degraded. A teacher stands before us who is not only teacher, but hero, strong, sometimes even passionate, fervent, devoted, brave. He has a burning hatred of shams and hypocrisies, and also of formalisms and externalities where the spirit is wanting or has departed. He is filled with a true Jewish idealism, for there is no more idealistic race than that of Israel. He is gifted with a deep insight into essentials, a love of the inward, the spiritual, the real. He has no ambition except one; to do the will of his Father in Heaven, and to serve the people to whom he has been sent. He is convinced of his own inspiration and of his mission, but in every other sense he is filled with a true humility. For his cause, which is the cause of God, and for all those who will believe in him, and whose servant and leader he is, he is determined to fashion his life, and is ready to sacrifice it. For them and for the cause he will bravely live, and he will bravely die.

These things, and such as these, may be surely and safely said, and perhaps it is well

for me, in reserve and restraint, to leave the subject there.

But the character of Jesus is merely the fringe of the matter which I have, as it were, to deal with or to neglect. A more important point for us to-day is not so much the character as the claim. Was not Jesus filled with a deep sense of his own personality? Was it not this which gave to his teaching that touch of authority which differentiated it not merely from the teaching of the Scribes, but even from the teaching of the Prophets? He does not say: "Thus saith the Lord," but "I say unto you." It may perhaps be doubted whether this insistence upon himself, so far as it is historic, was at first anything more than the prophetic conviction of inspiration. If he used the words "I say unto you," he may have used them in the sense that he spoke as the messenger or delegate of God. "I say unto you" may be, where it is historic, no more than the felt equivalent of, "Thus saith the Lord." If we compare Mark with Matthew and Luke, or, still better, if we compare the oldest with the latest passages of the three synoptics, we shall find that the personal claim in the oldest portions is, upon the whole, less emphasised, or it is brought into relation with the Messianic consciousness and the Messianic claim. We may perhaps, therefore, say that the personal claim was, in

truth, partly prophetic—belonging to Jesus as a prophet—but partly, and still more, Messianic, belonging to him in virtue of his belief that he was or would be the Messiah. It is, of course, quite possible to argue that it was partly this original sense of personal power, authority and inspiration which drove him on to think that he could be none other than that predicted One of whom the Prophets had spoken in the days of old. So then we are, in either case, brought face to face with that central question, which can be split up into many subsidiary questions, but which starts from, and comes back to, the main and fundamental question : Did Jesus think himself to be the Messiah ? Supplementary and dependent questions are : Did he call himself Son of Man, and what did he mean by the appellation ? Did he regard himself as the Son of God in some unique special sense which could be applied to none other than himself? Had God entrusted him with powers such as He had entrusted to none before him upon earth and such as He would entrust to none after him again ? And had he these powers given him because he was not only human, but divine ? These are the questions about Jesus which must be answered before we can obtain a sure and full estimate of his personality, his teaching, or his career.

Even these questions, numerous and

puzzling as they are, do not exhaust the list. It is, for instance, not merely a question whether he thought himself to be the Messiah or no, but also, supposing that he did, what *sort* of Messiah did he conceive himself to be? So with the other terms, Son of Man, Son of God; what did these *mean* to Jesus if he used them of himself? And lastly, what did he set out to do when he started his ministry? Did his intentions and objects undergo any modification during the brief months of his public career? He left Galilee; he went to Jerusalem, and there he was put to death. Did he go to Jerusalem with the foreknowledge of that death, and with the object of undergoing it? Was his death the conscious crown, or the disappointment, of his hopes, or was it, in some third intermediate sense, neither quite the one nor quite the other?

The string of questions is lengthy, and just as they are easy to put, so are they difficult, or even perhaps impossible, to answer. Hence we have the fact that between those who, in devout and humble faith, take the Gospels exactly as they find them, and those who, with exaggerated scepticism, deny that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical character at all, the investigators of the life of Jesus have suggested and adopted every sort of answer and solution. He thought himself the Messiah; he did not think himself the

Messiah ; he thought himself a Messiah in a special spiritual sense ; he believed he was the Messiah from the Baptism ; he only gradually believed himself to be the Messiah ; he called himself the Son of Man in this sense, in that sense, in a third, fourth, or fifth sense ; he did not call himself the Son of Man at all. Because he thought himself the Messiah, he felt himself to be the Son of God. Because he felt himself to be the Son of God, he thought himself to be the Messiah. He emphasised the conviction that he was mere man ; he believed himself to be divine. He went to Jerusalem to conquer and inaugurate the Kingdom ; he went to Jerusalem to die ; he was unsure whether he would live or die ; he was prepared for death as a possible, but unlikely contingency.

How is it possible that all these hypotheses or assertions have been made ? Doubtless the personal prepossessions, desires, and antipathies of the scholars and theologians themselves account for a good deal of the diversity, but they by no means account for it all. What accounts for most of it is that the sources are so fragmentary, so uncertain, and even so conflicting. For every main view, for every modification even of the main views, some passages of the Gospels can be used in support. Press some things, neglect others ; urge the historical character of this

and that, deny the historical character of the one and the other ; and you can fairly easily construct a picture of the life and death of Jesus, based upon what you, in all honesty, suppose to be the essential and historical elements in the Gospels themselves. No one can escape this method or rise superior to it. For the Gospels themselves, when properly and scientifically examined, are shown not to answer the questions I have enumerated with a single voice and in one particular way. The Gospels, when rightly tested, are inconsistent. Everybody must pick and choose ; everybody must accept or reject ; everybody, moreover, must even press or interpret.

On account of the particular point of view of these lectures, it will happily be unnecessary for me to attempt to answer all the fearful list of questions and puzzles which it has nevertheless been right to mention. Some of them—for example, the acutely difficult problem of the Son of Man—I propose to leave wholly untouched.

The fixed point in the midst of the tangle —and thus the starting-point for any inquiry —would seem to be the conviction in the mind of Jesus that the Kingdom of God was about to appear and to be inaugurated. As to this conviction, and the ardour with which it was held, there can surely be no possibility

of doubt. It may even be that what we do doubt and discuss and distress ourselves about is due to this : that Jesus himself was far more clear and convinced that the Kingdom would soon come than he was as to the exact nature of his own relation to it, and of his own position in it, or of what would exactly befall him before the complete inauguration arrived. Yet I would myself venture towards a further point of at least comparative certainty, and contend that, at some period in his brief ministry, Jesus formed and continued to hold the belief that to the Kingdom, which was imminent, he himself stood, or would stand, in some important personal relation. He was not the mere herald or prophet of the Kingdom, such as John. He was more than a prophet, and would occupy some office or post in the Kingdom of great significance and worth. A deduction of this kind from the Synoptic records does not appear to be unwarranted.

But if we may go as far as that from the words attributed to Jesus and from the incidents of his *life*, must not the manner of his *death* induce us to go still further? It can hardly be denied that Jesus was put to death by the Romans on the charge of claiming the Kingship of the Jews. Whether he claimed to be the Messiah or no, the Romans crucified him—or agreed to his crucifixion—because they were told, falsely or truly, that

he had made the claim, and had acted in accordance with it.

Combining these fixed points together, the inference seems to me to have preponderating weight that the relation in which Jesus believed that he stood, or would stand, to the Kingdom was that of its Chief or Head. The Chief of a Kingdom is its King. And the King of the Kingdom of God was the Messiah. For my part, then, I range myself with those scholars who, differing in many things, yet agree in this, that Jesus claimed the Messiahship, and believed himself to be the Messiah.

This opinion by no means solves all difficulties. One can easily say, "If Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, why"—and then there can follow a whole string of puzzling questions and problems. Nevertheless, the problems and the questions which can be started upon the hypothesis that Jesus never claimed or believed himself to be the Messiah seem to me harder and more far-reaching than those which the *other* hypothesis enables us to raise, and with this comparative advantage we must, I fancy, be content.

At what point in his career Jesus came to the belief, and, above all, what sort of Messiah he supposed himself to be, and when, and how, and in what sort of way, he would enter upon his Messianic functions are, how-

ever, all matters which the mere acceptance of the primary hypothesis leaves wholly undecided. In truth, the settlement of these secondary and dependent questions is almost or quite as difficult and perplexing as the settlement of the main question itself. In fact, some of the sorts of Messiah which have been suggested are so unlike the prevailing Jewish conceptions as to leave of the Messiahship little more than the name.

Thus the range of opinion as regards the nature of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, and as to his own special conception of the Messiahship, is extremely wide. On the one hand, it has been contended that his conception of the Messiah was closely similar to the prevailing Jewish conception ; on the other hand, it has been contended that it was widely different.

Perhaps I ought here to intercalate a few words as to what this Jewish conception actually was. Even this, which seems to be so easy, is not so easy as it seems. The Jewish conception of the Messiah in the days of Jesus was not quite the same as the conception which we find in Isaiah, and, on the other hand, there is evidence to show that, after the first century, through opposition to Christianity, the conception was again modified in the direction of Isaiah.

The base of the conception, its central

figure, was still doubtless that of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah—and this even in the days of Jesus. There you have the figure of a righteous monarch, filled with the divine spirit, which expresses itself in wisdom and power and the knowledge and fear of God, but yet a figure purely human, neither God nor demi-God. I hardly think that this description of him is in any way invalidated by certain dubious expressions in the ninth chapter, also relating to the figure of the Messiah.

But, by the age of Jesus there is some evidence to show that, in some quarters and in some minds, the conception of the purely human Messiah had been, to some extent, transcended. Though less than and distinct from God, he was conceived by some as more divine than the ordinary man. If Israel was God's first-born son, the Messiah was—in a special sense, as the representative of Israel—God's first-born son as well, and the vagrant thought of apocalyptic dreamers sometimes tried to picture him as already existent, ready to descend from heaven and from his place near the divine throne, to fulfil his allotted task upon earth, when the fated moment should arrive. Moreover, the doctrine of the resurrection, which had spiritualised and exalted the Messianic Kingdom, exalted also the figure of the Messiah. He became more

superhuman ; less a creature of ordinary flesh and blood, more concerned with a new and transcendent world, and therefore himself less clothed with the usual features of common mortality.

It is impossible to say how far Jesus, in his youth and early manhood, was cognizant of these conceptions, or how far he shared them, even before he in any way connected the Messiahship with himself. Nor can we say—I, at any rate, will not enter upon that vexed question—at what point in his career his Messianic consciousness and claim exactly began. His spiritual conviction that God was his divine Father, and that he was His child—not because he was more than man, but just because he *was* man—this spiritual conviction may have strengthened a growing assurance that he was to become, or already was, the Messiah, and may even have helped to cause it. The idea of the spiritual, and the idea of the theocratic, sonship may have acted and reacted upon each other, and though the former did not imply any already existing superhuman nature, the latter may have implied that such a nature would ultimately be acquired. When the latent or nascent Messiahship became actual, when the Kingdom was fully established and revealed —either before his death or as the result of it—then he would be invested with the full

Messiahship of office and the full Messiahship of nature, with all the change from his present human nature which this completed Messiahship might imply.

It is obvious that I have here only touched the fringe of the question, and that in a very superficial way. Returning now to the relation of Jesus's conception of the Messiah to the conception of the Messiah as held by his Jewish contemporaries, I have first to point out that there is a great objection on the part of many modern Christian theologians to allow that Jesus thought himself to be the Messiah in any "Jewish" sense of the word. The Jewish Messiah is called theocratic, political, national; he is pictured as a sort of more permanently successful Napoleon, whose office it was to deliver the Jews from their enemies and their subjection, to found a huge World-Empire, in which the Jews should be rich and prosperous, and all other people (so far as they were left alive) should be their vassals and their slaves. Of that World-Empire the Messiah would be the monarch, and would reign in pomp and glory for evermore. It is an unattractive picture, and it can easily be shown to have been alien to the character and convictions of Jesus. His Kingdom and his Kingship, we are told, were to be purely spiritual. He changed a material view into a spiritual view, translating material into ethical

terms. "As destined by a Divine vocation to inaugurate a reign of righteousness, a kingship of God over men's hearts and consciences, He felt Himself to be the true, because the spiritual, Messiah." [26] There was nothing national, material, political, or outward in his conception of the Messiahship. Truth and falsehood, exegesis and caricature, seem blended together in assertions such as these.

To begin with the caricature. For the supposed *purely* political Messiah of the Jews is nothing less. This conception presses features which are incidental, and omits features which are essential. It presses the outward prosperity, the World-Empire, the warrior-king, the vassalage of the nations ; it omits the righteous ruler, the righteous judge, the peace, the goodness, the knowledge of God, the conversion of the heathen to the true religion. Moreover, since the days of Isaiah there had been an undoubted tendency to take the destruction of the forces which should oppose the establishment of the earthly Kingdom of Heaven out of the hands of the Messiah, and to leave it to God. God would introduce the Kingdom ; *He* would punish the guilty and reward the good, and over the good and the repentant and the converted the Messiah, God's Vice-regent, would reign. If we so regard it, and if we remember that the conversion of the nations, or a great part of

them, is a standing feature of the Messianic age in the best Jewish conceptions, I see nothing so very unworthy of Jesus even if he did believe that he was destined to be the theocratic ruler and lord of the Jews in that Messianic Kingdom which was so soon to be ushered in by God.

Yet we may well suppose that, though Jesus believed himself to be the predestined theocratic chief of the coming Kingdom, the political elements of the conception were still further softened down by him or ignored. One has, however, to be careful and cautious, remembering that the Gospel records are prevailingly anti-Jewish, and, even in a certain sense, pro-Roman, and that, in view of later events and the relation of nascent Christianity to Judaism, the editing of the tradition would have been in the direction of denationalising its content and its character. Subject to this caution, we may perhaps safely press those noble sentences in which Jesus declares that true rule is true service, and perhaps we may find here the most original feature of his conception. We may add to this that, so far as the imperfect and edited records allow us to gather, Jesus was so profoundly concerned with morality and religion in their inward essence that questions of outward prosperity, or political constitution, or the political relations of the Jews to other races, were of no

interest to him. They apparently did not present themselves to his mind; they certainly formed no feature of his teaching. He would indeed be the chief of the Kingdom, but its true chief was its true servant. In what he did, and would do, for all who should form the citizens of that Kingdom would lie the essence and kernel of his Kingship. It is possible that with the conception of the Messiah, as the prophets and tradition had framed it, there mingled in his mind and heart that other prophetic conception of the Servant of the Lord, who was only to pass through humiliation and lowliness and sacrifice to his throne and his glory. It was, at any rate, rather from their sins and moral distresses that Jesus would save his people than from their outward troubles or their political subjection.

If, then, we now ask, "What new feature did his conception of himself as Messiah add to his teaching as a whole?" may we not answer that it seems to give to that teaching a special added touch of fervour and enthusiasm? We have now brought in the personal note. We have the chief in relation to his followers, the master to his disciples, the servants to their lord. "Do this for my sake," be good for my sake, take this painful resolve, go through with this hard task, achieve this sacrifice, for my sake. Here was

a new motive, which has been of tremendous power and effect in the religious history of the world. Even if, in the sentences where they occur, the words "for my sake" are not always genuine, yet the thought and the motive assuredly go back to the historic Jesus. The devotion of the leader to his men and to his cause—Jesus shared it. The devotion of the led to their leader—Jesus inspired it. He kindled a flame which was to burn more brightly after his death than ever before it in his lifetime. "For the sake of Jesus." Of what fine lives and deaths has not this motive been the spring and the sustainment! This must be freely and fairly acknowledged by all those who stand outside the Christian sanctuary and are not called by the name of Christ. They must fully and gladly acknowledge the mighty effects of this motive, "for my sake," "for Jesus' sake," even though they hold and claim that they can and ought to do no less for the sake of God.

Yet the immense power of the motive "for my sake" has been historically due not so much to the *life* of Jesus as to his *death*. That he died a horrible death of agony upon the cross — this has quickened the motive "for my sake" to fever heat. This has kept it keen and strong throughout the ages. Because the leader died and sacrificed himself for the led, therefore—so has run the invoca-

tion — let all disciples obey the summons to sacrifice throughout every generation.

We ask : was this death intentional ? Did Jesus foresee and realise that God intended only to bring the Kingdom after his death ? Did he realise that his death was the required and precedent condition before the Kingdom could be established ? Did he therefore go to Jerusalem deliberately intending to die for the sake of the cause ?

I think that we must be here content to say that no certainty can ever be arrived at. The fragmentary, but, above all, the edited and highly coloured, condition of the documents on this very point makes certainty impossible. We can only deal in probabilities ; *this* view is somewhat *more* likely ; *that* view somewhat *less*.

Upon the whole, I should at present be inclined to side with those scholars, such as Loisy, who hold that Jesus went to Jerusalem with the hope and the expectation of inaugurating the Kingdom, or of witnessing its inauguration, in his lifetime. God would bring about the crisis and the *dénouement* soon after he had reached the capital, and then he, Jesus, would be installed upon his Messianic throne. Nevertheless, the enterprise — bearding the Sadducean priesthood and the antagonistic high authorities in their very den—was obviously full of danger, and

possibilities of temporary defeat and death may well have crossed his mind. Yet the risk must be run; for the moment had arrived. God had called. So, whatever the risk, Jesus would answer to the call. One thing was certain and sure, whatever the risk to himself. The Kingdom would surely come; the promises of God would be fulfilled. It is true that the conception of a Messiah who should die, and rise, and only assume his Kingdom, and receive his glory, after his death and resurrection, was, so far as we know, as yet unheard of and unframed; yet, as Loisy has pointed out, if Jesus realised or thought that he might possibly be arrested and killed in Jerusalem, he could only have admitted the possibility of such a contingency to his mind, if with it he *also* conceived and assumed, at the very same time, and as a consequence, his speedy resurrection, in order to take his place, and fulfil his part, in that Kingdom which was so soon and so surely to arrive. If he contemplated his own death as a possibility, the very conditions of the case —namely, his undauntable conviction of the imminent Kingdom, and of his own connection with it—must have driven him on to postulate his resurrection.[27]

In any case, there must be no flinching and no shrinking. He had set his hand to the plough; he had counted the cost. He

would never look back. In this sense, then, we may truly say that he was ready to die, and that he consciously died, for the cause; that the leader died for the sake of the led, the master for his disciples, the shepherd for his flock.

Upon this feature of his death, as of his life, men's minds fastened. He had come to minister and to serve, and he crowned his voluntary service in life with a voluntary service in death. The greater men thought that he was and knew himself to be, the more wonderful this service seemed to them, till, when at last they thought that he was and knew himself to be God, there could be nothing more passing strange and wonderful in all earth and heaven.

Let me conclude by resting upon that one great word "service," for this is the special feature of his own conception of the Messiahship, and still more of that conception of it which has moved the world. His idea of Kingship was that of Plato; he only is the true King whose life is given for his people. Kingship is service.

# VI

## EXPANSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF THE AUTHENTIC TEACHING OF JESUS WHICH ARE FOUND IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

In the preceding lecture I have sought to speak about the historic Jesus — about his teaching and its relation to the religion of his contemporaries, about his own conception of his mission, his office, and his destiny. All that I have said has been based upon the Synoptic Gospels, and, like every other person who speaks about Jesus from the modern or critical point of view, I have made use of just those portions of the Gospels which seem to me most likely to be authentic records either of what Jesus said or of what he did. But the Gospels do not merely contain these supposed or assumed authentic passages. They contain much more. Moreover, they are wholes. It is in their entirety that they

have had large effects for good and some effects for evil.

The crimes, the cruelties, and the sins of Christianity and of Christendom, as well as its virtues, heroisms, and nobilities, must be taken into account, and the responsibility of the Gospels and of their hero for the one as for the other must be coldly analysed and calmly ascertained. The Gospels still exist for us to-day as wholes, and it is as wholes that they also, and still, have to be considered. Their *total* teaching, in its relation to the Judaism of the past and the Judaism of the present, has ultimately to be estimated and appraised. Not merely the portions and pieces which even the best and sanest criticism may hold to comprise the genuine teaching of the historic Jesus, but the whole contents of the three Synoptic Gospels should be discussed. The contributions of the editors, or of the compilers of the sources which the editors used, and the additions and accretions of the oral tradition before the first written sources were put together—all these form part of the actual Gospels as we have them now, and of the Gospels as for eighteen hundred years they have existed, and influenced the lives of men.

Needless to say that such a complex task cannot be undertaken in a single lecture. It could not be undertaken by me at all. All

that I here propose to do is to touch upon a few points in which, as I venture to think, we may trace, even within the Gospels, developments of the teaching of Jesus, sometimes for good and for truth, sometimes for falsehood and for evil. Needless to remark that when I speak of developments for good and evil, for falsehood and for truth, my tests are purely personal and subjective. It is merely what the present lecturer, a modern and unorthodox Jew, happens to think good and true, or what he happens to think false and evil.

We speak of the authentic or genuine portions of the Gospel records, and we speak of the additions of the editors or compilers, or of the tradition. How, it may be asked, do we distinguish the one from the other? Are the tests here, too, purely subjective? That a subjective element enters in cannot be denied; we find theologians of equal critical vigour strongly upholding and strongly denying the authenticity of particular sayings or parables. Yet over and above this margin of difference there is a good deal of agreement, and certain tests of authenticity are widely accepted. For instance, it is agreed by almost everybody that Mark is the oldest of the Gospels as a whole, and that for the incidents of the life of Jesus he is always, or almost always, the best and most trustworthy

authority. Again, though controversy still rages as to the document known to the critics and theologians as Q.—the document, namely, which was undoubtedly used by both Matthew and Luke, and which is the source of much, though not necessarily of all, which they have in common with each other, over and above what they also have in common with Mark—yet all scholars are agreed that the value of Q. material is considerable, though some would vote it higher than others. Again, sayings which, apparently, are what have been called "doubly attested," that is, which not only appear in more than one Gospel, but which seemingly go back to more than one independent and original source, are justly regarded as of high authentic probability. Or, finally, sayings which only appear in the less good and less ancient MSS. are held to be, more probably, later unauthentic accretions, especially if they interrupt the context or are otherwise unsuitable.

And here one passes by natural transition from these tests of sources to tests in the subject-matter itself. It is here, doubtless, that the subjective and personal element may most largely enter in. Still the presence of such danger must only make the critic more careful. He must not, because of the danger, eschew his task. He has, then, to argue that such and such passages and utterances seem

to him to reflect later situations, later beliefs, and are therefore probably not authentic. Still more delicate becomes the task when he has to argue that such and such passages or sayings are inconsistent with others, or inconsistent with the supposed character and teaching of Jesus as a whole.

One such argument I should like specially to notice here, because it is, I venture to think, though often used, of doubtful validity —at least when employed too largely. It is argued that Jesus was immeasurably greater and more original than his reporters, disciples, editors. Hence we get the following test. Whatever is most noble, beautiful, original, in the Gospel—whatever is least like the contemporary teaching of the Rabbis—that is most probably genuine and authentic. Whatever is inconsistent with these most excellent portions and elements—whatever, in fine, is least good, least original, least pleasing, that is probably to be set down as editorial accretion. That there is a *measure* of truth in this argument is, I think, certain. But it seems to me dangerous when pushed, as it often appears to be pushed, too far. For first, Jesus, like every other great teacher, was not always consistent. Nor was he always at his highest level. The circumstances of the moment, the antagonism of his opponents, moved him perchance to say in

hot blood what he would not have said in times of less excitement and agitation. Secondly, in moments of lofty inspiration he may have uttered, and probably did utter, opinions of daring novelty inconsistent with his own recorded utterances at other times of less strain and conflict. This would be the case in regard to anti-legal sayings as compared with pro-legal sayings found in other contexts. Thirdly, we must not always apply our modern tests of excellence to the teaching of Jesus. It does not follow that what seems best and most important to us seemed necessarily best and most important to him. But, lastly, we must not necessarily assume that the editors—even though lesser men—were not, now and then, able to think on Jesus' lines and carry forward even the very best features of his thought. The great German theologian, Wellhausen, to whose all too brief commentary upon, and introduction to, the Gospels, I, like many another, am so deeply indebted, bids us observe this caution. He is probably disposed to press the so-called literary test too exclusively. Whatever is not in Mark is for him suspect. Nevertheless, that sentence of his, "Die Wahrheit bezeugt nur sich selber, und nicht ihren Autor," "Truth testifies only to itself and not to its author," deserves careful consideration.[28] If a single saying of great nobility,

such as the famous, "Father, forgive them," is almost certainly not authentic, there seems no reason why ten such sentences, or why five noble parables, may not be unauthentic too. It is, doubtless, quite true that before many years had passed the character of Christian thought and literature greatly changed; but perhaps this is no adequate argument against the occasional happy inspiration of the earliest compilers and editors writing under the near influence of the master. Do we not see a parallel phenomenon in the Old Testament Prophets? There, too, the original authors were much greater than their editors: there, too, in another hundred years or so, the character of the literature entirely changed; and yet critics do hold, and, as I think, rightly, that now and then the editors rose to great heights of sympathetic comprehension, and that some of the noblest sayings in the prophetical writings are probably due to them and to their momentary inspiration.

In the Gospels we may detect an emphasis and expansion of the authentic thought of the historic Jesus in many directions. Sometimes that emphasis and expansion are in directions, or on lines, which to some of us to-day seem noble and great; at other times they are not. Sometimes they expand and emphasise the thought of Jesus where that

thought itself was inconsistent, and thus they expand and emphasise it, as it were, in opposite directions and inconsistently with one another. It is these expansions and amplifications, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil, to which our attention must now be called. I do not, however, propose to take them in any systematic order, and I obviously shall not be able to make any attempt at completeness.

First, let us notice the attitude of the Gospels towards Jew and Gentile. There had been here a double current in the teaching of Jesus. He had never dreamed of a general preaching of the Kingdom among the heathen, yet he had contemplated, like the prophets before him, that many heathens would be admitted into the Kingdom at its establishment; and he had, on a few separate occasions, done good, and spoken words of comfort, to some individual heathen. Did the editors here emphasise in both directions? As to the anti-Gentile utterances there is some doubt. Did Jesus say, "Go not unto the way of the Gentiles"? (Matt. x. 5). Did he say that he was only "sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24), and that "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs"? (Matt. xv. 26). Or are these utterances editorial? And is it the editor of an editor who softens

the last saying with an addition, "Let the children be filled *first*"? (Mark vii. 27). I will not attempt to decide. But, in any case, the order to "teach all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 19), and the saying that "the gospel must first be proclaimed among all peoples" (Mark xiii. 10), are certainly additions. Doubtless Jesus in the heat of his antagonism with certain Rabbis and Priests, and with those also who refused to accept the divine origin of his mission, declared that his opponents would not be admitted into the Kingdom (Matt. viii. 12). To him, as to Savonarola, his own cause was the cause of God. But the editor tried to make Jesus do more. The Jews, generally, are to be cast out into the outer darkness (Matt. viii. 12), and their places in the Kingdom are to be filled by "another nation" (Matt. xxi. 43). Jesus spoke his parables in order that those who are without might hear and not understand (Mark iv. 12). The Jews who refuse to listen to him are not the children of God, but the children of the devil (Matt. xiii. 38). The awful dualism of the Fourth Gospel has cast its shadow before.

No credence is likely to be given to me if I hold that the order, "Go not to any city of the Samaritans" (Matt. x. 5), is more likely to be genuine than the position which the Samaritans occupy in Luke, and that the

famous good Samaritan of the parable is rather due to the inspiration of the editor than to his master's.[29]

I pass, however, from this to another point. There were two sides in the character of Jesus, one stern and one tender, one forgiving and one severe. He preached and taught that we were to forgive and do good to our enemies, but in actual life he sometimes forgot to put his own precepts into practice; violent invective and denunciation of the sinner, who was also his opponent, rather than of his sin, fell sometimes from his mouth.[30] It was natural that the editors should usually expand and emphasise the lower side of the master's teaching rather than the higher, for in their time the cleft between the Synagogue and the Church had become more wide. Yet once or twice we have expansions upon the right side. Thus we have in some MSS. the fine but probably unauthentic saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 55, 56). The authorities differ as to the genuineness of the story of the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 2-11), but almost all are agreed as to the apocryphal character of the superb prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Surely we must be grateful to an editor who could

rise to such a noble height. On the other hand, we probably find many examples of the opposite tendency. Was it Jesus who said that if the brother will not repent his fault, even when it has been reported to the congregation, he shall be unto thee "as a heathen and a tax-collector"? (Matt. xviii. 17). Was it not rather Jesus who said, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven"? (Matt. xviii. 22). We cannot be by any means sure that Jesus did not speak of his opponents as "offspring of vipers and serpents" (Matt. xxiii. 33), but the vehemence and the number of his accusations against them, as recorded in Matthew's twenty-third chapter, have almost certainly been added to and exaggerated by the editors. At least, let us hope so—all the more because some of them are almost certainly untrue.

It is interesting to find that one commentator of eminence thinks that the tolerant saying, "he that is not against us is for us" (Mark ix. 40), is genuine, while the dubious utterance, "he that is not with me is against me" (Matt. xii. 30), is unauthentic, whereas another commentator of equal distinction takes exactly the opposite view.

Did Jesus say the ominous and only too faithfully fulfilled words, "I came not to send peace, but a sword"? (Matt. x. 34). In any case we must not make him responsible

for false interpretations. Even if the parable of the King's Supper be authentic, the words, "Exi in vias et saepes, et *compelle* intrare" (Luke xiv. 23), may not have the dread meaning which history throws back upon them, and which the Revised Version, by the ingenious substitution of "constrain" for "compel," has sought to soften and to remove. On the other hand, would that the dubiously authentic parable of the tares had been observed by the Church! Would that it *had* allowed the tares to grow in peace beside the wheat till the harvest of the Judgment Day (Matt. xiii. 30)! What endless sorrow, and pain, and misery would then have been spared to man!

I turn now to another point. We have seen that the historic Jesus had in all probability a certain antipathy to the rich. There was a certain tendency in his mind if not to identify, yet closely to bring together, riches and iniquity, poverty and righteousness, or at any rate the potentiality of righteousness. He was inclined to emphasise the distinction between this age and the next, regarding this age as the age in which the righteous must inevitably suffer and the wicked be prosperous, while the age to come would witness an exact reversal of these conditions. But these feelings and opinions were probably hardened and over-emphasised by some of the editors,

especially by Luke or one of his sources. "Woe unto you that are rich. Woe unto you that are full. Woe unto you that laugh now" (Luke v. 24, 25). These tremendous ejaculations are not unquestionably authentic. Again, we need not, I think, suppose that Jesus regarded tribulation and persecution as the *natural*, and almost as the *desirable*, lot of the good and the faithful before the establishment of the Kingdom. The doctrine of the resurrection and the future life which grew up among the Jews between the Old Testament and the New gave the key to an entirely different interpretation of earthly prosperity and earthly sorrows. Jesus made full use of this key, but though the future life enabled him (and others) to teach that earthly troubles must be thought light of and bravely and cheerfully borne, it is perhaps somewhat doubtful how far he went in positively *welcoming* misfortune, and in treating it as a privilege and a joy. "Happy are ye when men shall hate you and persecute you. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy" (Matt. v. 11, 12). There were no persecutions of his disciples in his lifetime. So have we not here intensifications of the authentic teaching, intensifications which, nevertheless, have borne great fruits, and been of enormous influence, in the history of the world? Did Jesus, indeed, say that "whoever does not

bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27, cp. Mark viii. 34)? Are there no true disciples except the persecuted and the martyr? Yet, in any case, what strength and high consolement in trouble, what ready and even joyous acceptance of pain, what prolonged courageous endurance of privations and sorrow in the service of the master and of his cause, have these words and others like them not produced! They struck a new and solemn note of high nobility in the religious development of mankind.

Connected with the expansion of the authentic teaching about suffering we may take the expansion of the teaching about renouncement. It is, of course, uncertain how far Jesus himself went in this direction. It is quite probable that his demands varied, and that towards the end of his ministry they were increased in severity. Scholars are not agreed as to this question. It is, for instance, disputed whether the famous reply to the rich man in Mark, "One thing thou lackest" (Mark x. 21), is a special requirement, made to fit the inquirer's case, or whether it was at that period the deliberate belief of Jesus that only those who literally renounced everything could be sure of a place in the Kingdom of God. Or did Jesus make a distinction between the full disciple on the one hand,

and an ordinary pious and humble believer on the other? I can hardly bring myself to believe that he thought that every one who did not literally sell all that he had and give it to the poor would be excluded from the Kingdom. In the Synoptics, as we have them, we find the tendency, however, to imply this. The difficulty of entering the Kingdom is intensified for all. And where, for instance, we are told by Jesus in Luke that "whoever renounces not all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 33), it would not appear that to Luke at any rate any clear distinction is intended between the ordinary believer on the one hand, and an inner ring of full discipleship upon the other.

I cannot do more than just allude to the awful question of Gehenna. That Jesus, like all his contemporaries, really believed in such a place of punishment for those who die upon earth seems to me scarcely to admit of doubt. But whether it is editors and commentators who have made him imply the hateful doctrine that those who reach "eternal" life are very few in number compared with those who miss it; whether it is he or they who speak to us of "eternal punishment" and "eternal and quenchless fire"; and what is the precise meaning of the Greek words which our Authorised and Revised Versions translate by "eternal" and by "punishment,"

I will leave undiscussed and undetermined. I will only add that to the modern Jew (who is a passionate universalist) no teacher whose reported words are so thickly strewn with allusions to Gehenna, and to the devil, and to the way that leads to destruction, and to permanent interdiction from everlasting life, can be regarded without the most grave and serious criticism.

Another tendency is discernible elsewhere. The beginnings of what may be called a double morality, so fateful in its consequences —an ordinary morality and ideal for the layman, another for the professional candidate for excellence and heaven—go back at least to the Synoptics, but not, in all probability, to Jesus. "If thou wilt be perfect," says Jesus to the rich man in Matthew (Matt. xix. 21). "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. xix. 12). But it is not implied that they who cannot will not also be saved. Thus the existence of two standards, one for the everyday person and one for an *élite*, is clearly presupposed. Such a double standard is, for good or evil—and there is something to be said on both sides—practically unknown to Judaism. There the ideal—to be holy even as God is holy—is the common obligation of all.

We may also observe a certain highly important generalisation and spiritualising of the

doctrine of renouncement. Jesus had said, "Whosoever would save his life must lose it" (Luke ix. 24, Mark viii. 35, etc.). By this saying he had almost certainly meant that a man must be prepared to give up all earthly possessions, and even life itself, in order to win admission into the Kingdom. Or, as we should say, you must be willing to sacrifice earth in order to gain heaven. Jesus was not looking at distinctions within the earthly life itself. He did not mean that in order to gain the higher life we must forgo the lower life. He did not mean, "die to live," in the sense in which that adage is so constantly used to-day. That may perhaps be the meaning of the saying as we find it in the Talmud,[31] but it was not the meaning of Jesus. In him the words have a definite and restricted eschatological signification. But already, in the Synoptic Gospels themselves we may trace the beginning of a more spiritual interpretation. In Luke—at least in many MSS.—we read: "If any man would walk after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me. For whoever would save his live shall lose it" (Luke ix. 23, 24). Here by the tiny addition of the single word "daily" we are introduced to the idea of a long life of continuous and regular self-denial. Such a life will lead to the other life beyond the grave,

but its value is also in itself. It has often been noticed that Luke points forward in many ways and in many places to the mystic and spiritual reinterpretation of the teaching of Jesus in the fourth Gospel. It is possible, though not probable, that he intended a certain Greek particle to be translated "within" and not "among," and that he therefore is responsible for the famous utterance, "the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). If Jesus said the words, we may, however, be fairly sure that the Greek particle, which represented the Aramaic original, must be rendered not "within" but "among." It is, in any case, curious that Luke emphasised both the outward and the inward side of the master's teaching—the outward, for example, by his intense insistence upon almsgiving, the inward by the instances that have already been adduced, and perhaps also by making Jesus urge his disciples to pray to God for the gift of the holy spirit (Luke xi. 13).

I have already observed that in the teaching of the historic Jesus there must have been a marked personal element. Yet this feature too was emphasised by tradition and the editor. "For my sake" probably occurs more often in the Gospels as we have them than it occurred in their sources; we may perhaps conjecture that it occurred more

often in their sources than in the mouth of Jesus. "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it" (Luke ix. 24). Jesus must be more loved than father, or mother, or daughter, or son (Matt. x. 37). Not God, or God's cause, but Jesus. What tremendous issues these words and others like them have had, it is unnecessary to state. But of one special application of them in the Gospels a word or two must be said. It is urged that any deed of love or charity done to a disciple is reckoned by Jesus as if it were done to himself. "Whoever shall give one of these little ones but a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 42). If a man receives the disciples, he receives the master, and receiving the master means receiving God (Matt. x. 40). But here again we have a spiritualisation. To "receive" meant at first to show hospitality. If the saying be genuine, we may suppose that this is what Jesus intended to say. But the word was soon given a more inward meaning. First, by the addition of the clause, "he who receives me, receives Him that sent me" (Matt. x. 40). And then by such amplification as we find in the saying, "whoever shall receive one of these little ones in my name receiveth me, and whoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me"

(Mark ix. 37). In this fullest form of the saying, the idea of the indwelling spirit of Christ and God seems, if not intended, yet prepared. "Receives" has journeyed more than half-way towards a profoundly mystical significance.

But ethically the most excellent, and also the most simple, amplification of the teaching "for my sake" occurs in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where the doctrine is laid down that any good deed is regarded by the risen and immortal Jesus as if it had been done to himself. "I was thirsty and you gave me drink. In so far as you rendered such services to one of the humblest of these my brethren, you rendered them to myself" (Matt. xxv. 35, 40). Here the deed of love has been done not "in the name of Jesus," not even consciously "for his sake," and yet it is accepted by him as done unto himself. And though the words used are "one of the humblest of these my brethren," it may perhaps not be going too far to assume that Jesus is here represented as speaking, not as the founder of a community, but as the head or representative of all suffering humanity at large. There is hardly any doubt that this fine passage is editorial and unauthentic. If so, how loudly it speaks for the occasional inspiration of the editors. Even its painful conclusion, with its horrible announcement

of "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment," cannot undo the impression and the significance of those wonderful and moving words, "In so far as ye did it to one of these my brothers, even to the least, ye did it unto me."

Now let me turn to quite another subject —the subject with which I opened these Lectures—the Law. The attitude of Jesus towards the Law and the religion of his contemporaries has already been touched upon. It had probably not reached the theoretic stage. Jesus still recognised the divinity of the Law; he did not make theoretic distinctions between ceremonial and ritual enactments, but he did so in practice and in conflict. Perhaps the most "theoretic" thing he ever said was not so much, "The Sabbath is made for man," but rather, "No man pours new wine into old wine-skins" (Mark ii. 22), a saying of which it is extremely hard to determine the precise significance which he may have meant to give to it, but which could obviously be interpreted in a most anti-legal and revolutionary sense. It is notorious that we find both a legal and an anti-legal strand in the editors, neither of which is probably authentic. Jesus probably did not say: "Not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the Law till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 18); or, "Whoever shall break one of

these least commandments shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. v. 19); or, "Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do" (Matt. xxiii. 2). But, on the other hand, he had not perhaps framed such a theory of the relation of his own teaching to the Law as to say: "The Law said this, but I, on the contrary, tell you this"; or again, "I come not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). Even his saying about true inward defilement was not intended to go as far as his Pauline editor supposed: "Thus spake he, making all foods clean" (Mark vii. 19, R.V.). It is disputed whether the prohibition of all divorce, on every ground, as we have it in Mark, or its prohibition in all cases except for unchastity, as we find it in the Sermon on the Mount, more authentically represents his genuine teaching.

I am on more dangerous and disputed ground when I take the line that the conscious and intentional opposition of his own teaching, as (in one sense) easy, to the heavy burdens of the teaching of the Rabbis is also due to the editors and not to the master. We perceive a tendency to represent the mass of the people either as quite neglected—"sheep without shepherds"—or as groaning beneath a heavy burden, the burden of the Rabbinic Law. Matthew speaks of them as "harassed and prostrate" (Matt. ix. 36).

Of their teachers he makes Jesus say: "They bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. xxiii. 4). In Luke the same idea is expressed thus: "Ye lade men with burdens heavy to be borne, and yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke xi. 46). The charge is historically inaccurate, and in all probability it was never made by the historic Jesus. But it supplies a fine foil for the verses, partly modelled upon Ecclesiasticus, in which, in spite of the repeated assurance that "whoever does not renounce all that he has, or whoever does not bear his cross, cannot be my disciple," Jesus invited the weary to find rest under his yoke. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28). To how many sorrowing and suffering souls have these words not brought healing and strength and courage! But it is by no means certain, to say the least, that they were ever uttered by the historic Jesus.

The same may be said, in my judgment, for the immensely important passage which precedes them. There was doubtless a certain antagonism in the life and teaching of Jesus to the intellectualism of the Rabbis, or perhaps

I should say, upon occasion, to their intellectual casuistry. They were also well able to discern weak spots in their opponent's arguments; they could show, as in the discussions about the Sabbath they probably did show, where Jesus was logically wrong, even if he was morally right. Jesus made his appeal to the general public, and even to the submerged tenth, rather than to the most educated and cultivated classes. Yet to a theoretic antagonism to a wisdom which happened to oppose his doctrine or claims, such as we find, for instance, in the Pauline "wisdom puffeth up," or "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," he in all probability did not advance. It is true that he said, "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom as a little child will not enter it" (Mark x. 15), but we need not think of him as deliberately depreciating wisdom and intelligence and reason. It is probably an editor, and not himself, to whom those significant words (with their various issues for good and evil) must be ascribed, "I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and the clever, and has revealed them unto the simple" (Matt. xi. 25).

The verse that follows this striking utterance brings me to the last point or subject of amplification and emphasis which I am able to mention. And just because this last point

is so important and difficult, I must content myself with a very few words. I refer to the conception which Jesus formed about himself. Here the emphasis is naturally all on one side. We have seen that in all probability the historic Jesus did regard himself as the Messiah, and did therefore hold that his position towards, and his place in, the Kingdom was primary and exceptional. He was its chief or head. Moreover, even before the Kingdom actually arrived, Jesus, as the Messiah *in posse* felt that he possessed greater power, and claimed a more personal allegiance, than any prophet before him. Even before he realised that he was the Messiah, he realised his power of healing, he taught with a conviction of direct personal inspiration, he sought to win men over not merely, if I may so express myself, to God's side, but also to his own. So far, I think, we must go. Yet so far as we can judge, his estimate of his own power, and of his relation to God, was gradually intensified by the sources and the editors.

The Kingdom of God becomes *his* Kingdom ; it is he who brings it at his Parousia or manifestation in glory. He becomes at the supreme crisis and tribunal not merely the witness, but the judge. At his resurrection he announces that all power has been given to him in heaven and on earth.

Again, Jesus as a prophet, like the prophets of old, doubtless announced that divine pardon for sin which is the great prerogative of God. But even in Mark there is a subtle advance, and a distinct claim for independent action. Jesus, the Son of Man, the Messiah, has power to forgive sins, and so immediate and direct is the power which he ascribed to himself in this regard that the Rabbis say or feel: "Is not this blasphemy? Can any one forgive sin but God?"[32] (Mark ii. 7).

We know that Jewish speculation had advanced in some quarters beyond the conception of a purely human Messiah as we find it in the oldest prophets. There was a certain tendency among a few thinkers to make of him a super-human and pre-existent being. It is, however, doubtful whether the historic Jesus shared these speculations or believed in them. In his earthly career he probably felt himself to be no more divine than his neighbours; he and they were both the children of God, though none perhaps realised this sonship so purely and intensely as he. If he was the Son of God in any other sense, it was in virtue not of his nature, but of his Messiahship. At the inauguration of the Kingdom, at the resurrection, he may very likely have believed that his own nature, like all men's, would be changed, and his to a greater degree of glory than theirs. Further

than that it is hardly safe to go. But it is scarcely needful to point out that the sources and the editors went a good deal further. Jesus very soon became, not merely the Son of God as Messiah, but the Son of God in his own nature. There was only one Son as there was only one Father. In a very ancient verse in Mark, which is nevertheless probably not authentic, we find the Son used in this absolute sense by Jesus, and though in knowledge of one particular subject he is inferior to the Father, he is nevertheless pointedly inferred to be superior to the angels (Mark xiii. 32). And in one of Matthew's sources —a very ancient source, moreover—we find the beginning of that mournful Christian particularism which would deny any true knowledge of God the Father except to those who also believe in the Son. "All was delivered unto me by my Father; and no man knoweth the Son except the Father; neither knoweth any the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son would reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).

In my perverse and prejudiced Jewish outsideness, I still continue to hope that we have here an intensification of a source and not a genuine record. And if the great Harnack keenly upholds the authenticity, I have the satisfaction of feeling that other distinguished authorities, such for instance

as Loisy, are against him. I would rather think of Jesus, in the quaint words of Mr. Balmforth, as "a Unitarian above all men."[33] I would rather end these lectures by recalling that famous passage in Mark, already objectionable to, and altered by, Matthew, in which Jesus replies to the rich man who had called him good, "Why callest thou me good? No one is good save God alone" (Mark x. 18; Matt. xix. 17, R.V.). Or, lastly, that other passage in Mark, no less significant and beautiful, in which Jesus and the best spirit of his own religion are brought into unison and agreement. "Then one of the Scribes asked him, Which commandment is the first of all? And Jesus" (like the good Jew that he was) "answered him and said, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. And the second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these. And the Scribe said unto him, Excellently, Master, hast thou said the truth, that He is One, and there is none other but He; and to love Him with all one's heart and with all one's understanding and with all one's strength, and to love one's neighbour as one-

self, is much better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." If, leaving other things for the moment aside, some one would say, "here is true Christianity," then, I too, leaving other things for the moment aside, would fain also say, "here is true Judaism." Thus, like the Scribe and Jesus, we too, the Christian and the Jew, can meet together, and so, perhaps—while each of us will still prefer the accents of his own home—we may yet, with Jesus, say of the other, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

# NOTES

(1) As to the question of ritual purity and the extent to which the ordinary layman had to trouble himself about "Levitical" cleanness or uncleanness, see Montefiore, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of the ancient Hebrews* (Hibbert Lectures), pp. 474-478. Also additional note 10 by Mr. Israel Abrahams in vol. iii. of my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels* (to be published shortly).

As to the religious condition of the masses of the people, this involves the question of the 'Am ha-Aretz. For this see additional note 43 by Mr. Abrahams in vol. iii. of my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels*, and Dr Büchler's large monograph, *Der galiläische 'Am ha-Aretz des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1906), and his short pamphlet *The political and the social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris in the second and third Centuries* (1909).

(2) This conception of the old prophets is largely based upon Wellhausen. Cp., for instance, his *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, p. 110 (3rd ed.), p. 110 (6th ed.).

(3) Cp. *Synoptic Gospels*, p. lxxx. 53, 54, and the authors there quoted, especially Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. p. 231.

(4) The reference here is to the abolition by the Rabbis of the literal application of the *Lex talionis* and

the substitution of a monetary fine. See my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 513, and the additional note 38 (in vol. iii.).

(5) The reference is to Prof. Bacon's commentary on Mark (*The Beginnings of the Gospel Story*), 1909, where phrases of this kind occur several times.

(6) See Burkitt's *Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 170-173.

(7) I refer here to the conflict about vows as recorded in Mark vii. 11. Cp. my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 164-166.

(8) Cp. the discussion in my *Commentary*, pp. 167-176. The translation of Mark vii. 19*b*, according to R.V., "This he said, making all meats clean," assumes that Mark, at any rate, or a later editor, interpreted the words of Jesus to mean that he abolished the distinction of meats and the dietary laws of the Pentateuch.

(9) In a friendly review of my *Synoptic Gospels* in the *Nation* (April 9, 1910) the writer says: "When he blames Jesus for breaking the law of love by vehemently denouncing the Pharisees, the censure fails in psychological acuteness. One had imagined that Martineau had given the death-blow to this sort of criticism." My criticism of this criticism must be reserved for another place and occasion. A wise and dear friend, who kindly revised these lectures in proof, wrote: "I do not feel quite as you do about the 'woes' to the Pharisees. These woes, it seems to me, were pronounced on the class, *so far as they possess the faults referred to in the context*, just as Jesus says elsewhere, 'Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.' In neither case need Jesus, it seems to me, be supposed to express hatred of the persons addressed, but only hatred of an attitude of mind." This criticism must also be considered elsewhere.

(10) Perhaps demoniac possessions should not be put

upon the same level as disease in respect to previous sin. Dr. Plummer says emphatically : "Christ did not treat possession either as disease or as sin. He seems never to have blamed the possessed, or to have suggested that they had brought the affliction upon themselves" (*An Exegetical Commentary on St. Matthew* (1910), p. 104).

(11) In my interpretation of Jesus's conception of the kingdom of heaven I mainly follow Loisy and Johannes Weiss. In the famous passage in Luke xvii. 21, I translate the Greek preposition by "among" and not by "within."

(12) *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 126.

(13) The reference is to Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. p. 238, and similar passages.

(14) The references are to Prof. B. W. Bacon, *The Beginnings of the Gospel Story* (1909), p. 136, and to Loisy, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 239.

(15) The expression "for my sake" is found in Mark viii. 35 (Matthew x. 39, xvi. 25 ; Luke ix. 24) ; Mark x. 29 (Matthew xix. 29) ; Mark xiii. 9 (Matthew x. 18 ; Luke xxi. 12) ; Matthew v. 11 (cp. Luke vi. 22). The authenticity of the phrase in every one of these passages is not above suspicion.

(16) The reference is to Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. p. 229.

(17) See Dr. Schechter's articles on "Rabbinic Parallels to the New Testament" and "Rabbinic Conceptions of Holiness" in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. xii. (April 1900) p. 427, and vol. x. (October 1897) p. 11, and my *Commentary*, p. 499.

(18) See Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. p. 233.

(19) The allusion is to Harnack in his *Wesen des Christentums* and elsewhere.

(20) See Luke xvii. 10. I follow the Sinaitic Syriac in omitting the adjective "useless" or "unprofitable." Cp. my *Commentary*, p. 1008.

(21) The reference is to H. Gunkel in a note in his commentary upon the 4th book of Esdras (vii. 32) in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des alten Testaments*, vol. ii. p. 370 (1900).

(22) The reference is to Luke xiii. 1-9. Cp. my *Commentary*, p. 965.

(23) The reference is to Abodah Zarah, 17*a*.

(24) The reference is to Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, p. 384, note 1 (ed. 3), p. 389, note 2 (ed. 4). In edition 6 this footnote has disappeared.

(25) The reference is to the *Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett*, by Abbott and Campbell, vol. ii. pp. 85, 445.

(26) Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 39. Tyrrell is here describing the conception which "Liberal Protestants" have formed of the Messiahship of Jesus.

(27) See Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. p. 223.

(28) See Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (1905), p. 86.

(29) The bearing of this remark will be found in my *Commentary upon the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 935-937. I need not here repeat what is there said, but I am very glad to observe that in a very kindly notice of my book in the *Christian Commonwealth*, Prof. Cheyne has accepted the suggestion of J. Halévy, for which I have contended.

(30) See Note 9.

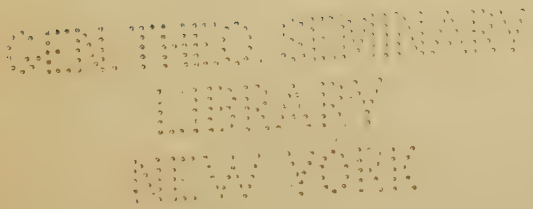
(31) The reference is to Tamid, 32*a*, where we read: "Alexander of Macedon asked the Wise Men of the South two questions. . . . He asked: What should a man do that he may live? They answered: Let

him kill himself. He asked them : What should a man do that he may die ? They answered : Let him keep himself alive."

(32) It is possible that in the original narrative which underlies Mark ii. 1-12, or in the source from which it was taken, verse 5*a* was immediately followed by 11*b* (*i.e.* (5) "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the paralysed man (11) : Arise and take up thy bed, and go home.") The section about the forgiveness of sins may have been interpolated. So Loisy, *Évangiles synoptiques*, vol. i. pp. 88, 107, 480. Bacon, *Beginnings of the Gospel Story*, pp. 23, 24.

(33) The reference is to *The Bible from the Standpoint of the Higher Criticism*, vol. ii. : *The New Testament in the Light of the Higher Criticism* (1905), by Ramsden Balmforth, p. 246.

THE END



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